

**Department of Legislative Services**  
Maryland General Assembly  
2008 Session

**FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE**  
**Revised**

House Bill 1139

(Delegate Kullen)

Environmental Matters

Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

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**Calvert County - Regulation and Protection of Animals**

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This bill provides that the county sheriff, a deputy sheriff, or an animal control officer in Calvert County may issue a summons to anyone violating county animal control ordinances. If an officer of a humane society or an animal control officer in Calvert County sees a person committing a misdemeanor that involves animal cruelty, the officer must arrest and bring before the District Court the person committing the misdemeanor. The bill also repeals provisions relating to the appointment of a dog warden and deputy dog wardens in Calvert County.

The Calvert County Commissioners may establish an Animal Matters Hearing Board to resolve disputes and controversies regarding animal control ordinances. The board may issue a subpoena to compel parties to appear before the board and may assess a civil penalty up to \$1,000 for each violation.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** None.

**Local Effect:** The bill would not materially affect Calvert County finances.

**Small Business Effect:** None.

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**Analysis**

**Current Law:** In Calvert County the dog warden and deputy dog wardens are responsible for enforcing county ordinances on the treatment of domestic animals. The

dog warden is appointed by the county board of commissioners. The county commissioners may by ordinance provide for the regulation, humane treatment, and keeping of domestic animals, including the authority to assess a penalty for a violation of a provision of an ordinance of imprisonment in the county jail not exceeding 30 days or a fine not exceeding \$1,000 or both.

Under State law, if an officer of a humane society sees a person committing a misdemeanor that involves cruelty to an animal, the officer must arrest and bring before the District Court the person committing the misdemeanor. However, in Baltimore County, the County Department of Health, Division of Animal Control has this duty.

**Background:** According to the fiscal 2008 Calvert County budget, the county animal control department is staffed by five animal control officers and one office aid. County animal control expenditures are estimated at \$500,192 in fiscal 2007 and \$679,129 in fiscal 2008.

**Local Fiscal Effect:** As advised by Calvert County, the creation of an Animal Matters Hearing Board could be handled within existing budgeted resources. The board would consist of volunteers and could use existing facilities for hearings. The board may require some county staff for support, but any additional responsibilities could be handled at current staffing levels.

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### **Additional Information**

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** None.

**Information Source(s):** Calvert County, Judiciary (Administrative Office of the Courts), Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - February 21, 2008  
ncs/hlb Revised - House Third Reader - April 1, 2008

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