



House Bill 432

*Public Health – Rabies Vaccination Information –
Submission to Local Agencies and Use for Licensing*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health & Government Operations
Committee

Date: February 14, 2017

From: Natasha Mehu

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 432 as it helps strengthen enforcement and compliance with rabies vaccination and pet licensing laws.

HB 432 authorizes designated local animal agencies to request rabies vaccination certificates or information for dogs, cats, and ferrets from licensed veterinarians. It also allows rabies vaccinations records to be used for the purposes of licensing the animals. Under current law, local agencies do not have the authority to compel this information from veterinarians and are prohibited from using the information to license pets.

Rabies in Maryland is most often found in wild animals such as bats, raccoons, skunks, and foxes. However, unvaccinated pets are vulnerable to the disease, which is easily transmittable to humans through bites, scratches, and saliva from infected animals. Rabies progresses quickly and painfully. It is almost always fatal.

Strong vaccination and licensing laws help local governments protect the health of pets and the humans that come in contact with them. Efficient record sharing and retention provide agencies with the additional benefits of being able to quickly identify pets and their vaccination status.

Local governments have an interest in the health and safety of their communities, and therefore support improving pet vaccination and licensing laws. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 432.