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House Appropriations Committee

House Office Building, Room 121

6 Bladen St.

Annapolis, MD 21401

April 2nd, 2018

Rep. McIntosh,

The American Society for Pharmacology & Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) presents its comment on the amended version of S.B. 675, the *Humane Adoption of Companion Animals Used in Research Act of 2018*. ASPET supports the bill as amended.

ASPET is a 5,000 member scientific society located in Bethesda, MD whose members conduct essential basic and clinical pharmacological research and work for academia, government, large pharmaceutical companies, small biotech companies, and non-profit organizations. ASPET members work in a variety of different fields and their efforts help to develop new medicines and therapeutic agents to fight existing and emerging diseases. Our members take seriously the responsibility of working with research animals and are committed to abiding by existing animal welfare regulations.

Many of ASPET's members work at Maryland research institutions, including Johns Hopkins University and Medicine (Johns Hopkins) and the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), and, in consultation with them, we believe adoption practices at those institutions meet current professional standards. Both organizations currently have in place successful programs to adopt out research animals (not just limited to dogs and cats). Many of the adoptions are by employees or their friends and family, and adoptive owners are screened to make sure they are capable of caring for the animal. In the case of Johns Hopkins, the program has existed for decades without incident and with zero dogs or cats returned.

There is also already a tremendous amount of regulation and institutional and professional policy governing the use of animals in research. At your typical research institution, an ASPET member will need to abide by standards developed by an Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC), he or she will consult with trained veterinarians and laboratory animal technicians to ensure that animals are receiving high-quality care, and he or she will abide by the 3R model that guides how animals should be used in biomedical research: *replace* animal models with non-animal models where feasible, *reduce* the numbers of animals in research, and *refine* methods to improve animal welfare. In the case of Johns Hopkins, their

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researchers have already reduced their use of dogs and cats in animal research by approximately 97% from numbers reported in 1995 and 1997. The addition of a state-reporting requirement for adoptions of a handful of dogs and cats will create another layer of bureaucracy with limited practical benefit. Compliance with the reporting requirement will necessitate additional resources and divert these institutions from their primary aim of conducting research.

For these reasons, ASPET requests a favorable report on S.B. 675 as amended.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John D. Schuetz", with a stylized flourish at the end.

John D. Schuetz, PhD
President, ASPET