

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2026 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
First Reader

House Bill 1038 (Caroline County Delegation)
Government, Labor, and Elections

Caroline County - Regulation of Animals - Dogs

This bill repeals the requirement that a dog owner in Caroline County must apply to the county tax collector for a dog license each year. The bill also repeals other related provisions related to dog licensing in the county, but retains the authority of the county commissioners to adopt rules and regulations regarding the issuance of dog licenses in the county.

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None.

Local Effect: The bill is not expected to materially affect Caroline County finances, as discussed below.

Small Business Effect: Minimal.

Analysis

Bill Summary/Current Law: In Caroline County, the county tax collector is generally responsible for the issuance and replacement of dog licenses and dog tags. The county commissioners are required to prepare and supply tags to the county tax collector each year.

By July 1 of each year, owners of a dog at least six months of age in the county must apply to the county tax collector for a license for the dog. The applicant must pay a dog or kennel license fee, as determined by the county commissioners, at the time of application. The license expires on July 1 of the year after it has been issued.

A dog license in Caroline County must include the date of issuance, a serial number, and a description of the dog licensed. The tag must be: (1) metal; (2) imprinted with the corresponding serial number; (3) imprinted with the calendar year the tag is issued; (4) no more than one inch in length; and (5) come equipped with a substantial metal fastener. A kennel license tag must contain the word “kennel”.

License holders are required to attach the tag to a substantial collar and keep the collar and tag on the dog at all times, with limited exceptions. If the tag is lost, the county tax collector is responsible for replacing lost tags after: (1) the original licensee submits an application; (2) a new license has been produced; and (3) a 25 cent fee is paid.

The bill repeals the above provisions in statute but retains the authority of the county commissioners to adopt rules and regulations regarding the issuance of dog licenses.

Local Fiscal Effect: While the bill repeals provisions requiring a person owning or keeping a dog in Caroline County to apply to the county tax collector for a dog license, the bill retains the authority of the county commissioners to adopt rules and regulations regarding the issuance of dog licenses. The Department of Legislative Services anticipates the county will retain its current dog licensing fees. According to the Caroline County Animal Control [website](#), the cost for the registration and vaccine certification is \$3.00 for any dog that *is* spayed or neutered, and \$10.00 for any dog that *is not* spayed or neutered, which is paid to the Caroline County Humane Society. In addition, there is a 25 cent fee to replace a license tag.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: SB 703 (Caroline County Senators) - Finance.

Information Source(s): Caroline County; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - February 24, 2026
js/tso

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