

Good Evening Councilmembers.

My name is Jennifer Hughes and I'm representing Montgomery County Partners for Animal Well-being. Many of you also know me as the former director of the County's OMB. Some of you also know me as Dr. No, a moniker bestowed on me by County Executive Leggett. Yet I am here today asking you to add \$250,000 to the Office of Animal Services Budget to fund a long standing and desperate need for a robust spay neuter program that provides these services to the many families in Montgomery County who cannot afford to provide this basic vet care to their beloved pets.

Several times in the past year, the shelter has reached crisis levels in their population. They have responded with short term fixes. As noted in the Maddie's Fund report, a robust spay/neuter program is a critical step in long-term control of shelter populations. From my research, a robust community spay neuter program can reduce shelter intakes by 20%. For the County shelter that could mean a savings of \$500,000 based on Washington County, MD's cost of each of their intakes. The savings would more than offset the cost of the program, which explains why Dr. No is so supportive of spending this money.

There is a non-profit MCPAW partner organization, MCSNIP, that has available to it a mobile clinic at a cost of \$1/year. The \$250,000 would fund the necessary operating costs through contract vets. The funds could be provided to MCSNIP through a non-competitive grant as was envisioned under the previous OAS Director and would cost effectively serve the economically disadvantaged communities throughout the County.

I understand that Director Hairfield is now on-board and you need to provide her the opportunity to get the lay of the land, but I am asking you to appropriate these funds in the FY 25 budget for this specific purpose, and allow her to determine the best way to provide these services to the community. MCSNIP has a well thought-out proposal that would allow the community program to quickly get off the ground, with no additional resources from OAS.

The Executive funded MCSNIP in last year's budget but did not include funding for it in the FY 25 budget, I think believing that another nonprofit group would be providing the same service at no cost to the County. While there is another nonprofit that is purchasing a mobile spay/neuter clinic, we understand it will be focusing on rescue group animals and community cats and is operating only 2 days per week. We support their efforts.

However, the FMCA program complements, rather than replaces MCSNIP since they will not be serving disadvantaged communities where the need for low and no cost spay/neuter services is great. The MCSNIP program will cost-effectively

address the Council's stated goals of fairness and equity for underserved County residents.