



## SENATE BILL 383

### Public Health - Frederick County - Dogs in Outdoor Dining Areas

February 18, 2010

#### POSITION: Oppose

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Senate Finance Committee:

On behalf of the members of the *Restaurant Association of Maryland*, we oppose Senate Bill 383. While this legislation is a local bill intended to affect only Frederick County, this is an issue that has the potential to spread into other local jurisdictions or statewide.

We realize that this bill is merely enabling legislation that allows the Frederick County Commissioners to adopt a related local law, ordinance or regulation. However, we have long been opposed to allowing pets in dining areas for several valid reasons.

First, statewide regulations for foodservice establishments prohibit pets in indoor areas, with the exception of pets used by individuals with disabilities. Revised regulations will soon extend this prohibition to also include outdoor areas of foodservice facilities. Moreover, many of our members have expressed concerns about liability, higher insurance costs, allergies and sanitation issues related to pets in dining areas.

Unless the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene relaxes statewide regulations on this subject, we are unlikely to reconsider our position on local or statewide legislation regarding this issue.

For these reasons, we oppose SB 383 and request an unfavorable report.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvin R. Thompson  
Senior Vice President  
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