

*Commission on Local Government*

**Estimate of Local Fiscal Impact**  
2010 General Assembly Session

**Bill:** HB 1056      **Patron:** Armstrong      **Date:** January 27, 2010

In accordance with the provisions of § 30-19.03 – 30-19.03:1.1 of the Code of Virginia, the staff of the Commission on Local Government offers the following analysis of the above-referenced legislation:

**I. Bill Summary**

HB 1056 clarifies the duties and responsibilities of animal control officers, who shall be sworn law-enforcement officers with jurisdiction over animal control and protection laws. The bill further provides that all sheriffs, police officers, conservation police officers, or other peace officers of the Commonwealth shall be ex officio animal control officers. HB 1056 also provides that, when in uniform or upon displaying a badge or other credentials of office, animal control officers and deputy animal control officers shall have the power to issue a summons or obtain and execute a search warrant or a felony warrant as necessary. Under current law, felony warrants must be executed by law enforcement officers. The bill also requires localities to notify the State Veterinarian within 30 days of any change in the employment or training status of the animal control officers it employs. At present, such reporting does not need to take place within a specific timeframe.

**II. Fiscal Impact Analysis**

The Commission on Local Government received fiscal impact statements from 15 localities – the Counties of Campbell, Henrico, New Kent, Northumberland, Prince William, Rappahannock, Roanoke, Spotsylvania and York; the Cities of Danville, Hopewell, Lynchburg and Winchester; and the Towns of Blacksburg and Quantico.

Ten localities - the Counties of Henrico, New Kent, Northumberland, Prince William, Roanoke and Spotsylvania; the Cities of Lynchburg and Winchester; and the Towns of Blacksburg and Quantico – reported that HB 1056 will require no additional expenditure. The responding counties indicated that the animal control officers in their jurisdictions are already sworn law enforcement officers, and the towns indicated that animal control in their jurisdictions is the responsibility of their parent counties. One locality – Rappahannock County – estimated that the county would experience additional expenditures of less than \$5,000.

Four localities – the Counties of Campbell and York and the Cities of Danville and Hopewell – each estimated that they would experience additional expenditures of more than \$5,000 to implement the bill's provisions. For the most part, their estimates took into account increased costs associated with training and equipping animal control

officers as sworn law enforcement officers. Most of their estimates also factored in higher salaries that are paid in their jurisdictions to sworn law enforcement officers.

The localities' estimates for annual operating costs ranged from \$5,000 to \$60,000, and their estimates for nonrecurring start-up costs ranged from \$10,000 to \$53,472. Their estimates for total first year cost to the locality ranged from \$15,000 to \$81,787 as follows:

Campbell County	\$15,000
Danville City	\$31,466
Hopewell City	\$65,000
York County	\$81,787

### **III. Conclusion**

HB 1056 will clearly have a fiscal impact on localities in which the animal control officers they currently employ are not sworn law enforcement officers. This fiscal impact will vary from locality to locality depending on the number of animal control officers employed by the jurisdiction and may include the additional costs associated with training and equipping sworn law enforcement officers as well as the higher salaries generally paid to such officers.

However, HB 1056 also provides that all sheriffs, police officers, conservation police officers, or other peace officers of the Commonwealth shall be ex officio animal control officers. If, as ex-officio animal control officers, such officers will be required to complete animal control officer training, all jurisdictions will likely incur additional costs associated with the training as well as the time such officers will be required to spend away from their law enforcement duties in order to complete the training.