

February 20, 2022



Rep. Roger Hauck
Chair, Regulatory Reform Committee
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Rep. Hauck,

I write in opposition to HB 4881 and HB 4882 that propose to regulate the disposition of research animals and impose punitive action upon failure to provide requested reporting.

The Michigan Biosciences Industry Association, or MichBio, represents the interests of the almost 1,900 bio-industry facilities and 40,000 professionals that make up Michigan's biosciences community directly, a top-15 cluster nationally and over \$35 billion economic driver to the state's economy. Our members include academic and clinical research institutions as well as companies engaged in the discovery, innovation, development and manufacturing of therapeutics, treatments, and products that save lives.

The use of animals is an integral and required component of that R&D process, and their use is regulated at the federal levels through various agencies, as well as by accreditation and professional bodies. All have strict standards and protocols that must be met for the ethical and legal use of animals in research, and the highest level of humane care. Much is guided by statute, for example via the federal Animal Welfare Act.

The proposed legislation is unnecessary and a misguided effort to address a problem that simply doesn't exist. Michigan's public and private research enterprises already have adoption programs, along with guidance, documents and policies in place, some for many years. These were established with agencies and non-profit organizations that have been vetted and allow for the adoption of suitable research animals after the research has been concluded and careful evaluation is conducted regarding animal disposition. It's a clear demonstration of how successful collaboration works without the need for legislation.

A blanket mandate for adoption of research animals is not recommended, nor wise. Adoption is not always the best option. But when it is possible, a process for adoption should be very specific and oriented to each individual animal. This ensures that research animals, especially if they are special needs or high need, can be placed appropriately. Animals who have spent time in the research setting are not often appropriate candidates for pets and may not adjust well to residential settings. That's why it is so important for researchers, veterinarians and other professionals versed in animal welfare to conduct thorough evaluations, including assessments of health and temperament, before being deemed suitable for adoption. Working in tandem with shelters and rescue groups, those professionals are in the best position to determine an animal's well-being, not an administrative mandate lacking specifics.

In many cases, adoption is simply not possible. Study protocols and their approvals by regulatory agencies may leave no possibility other than euthanasia. Moreover, the Animal Welfare Act has

requirements regarding final disposition of “covered” animals. This greatly reduces the pool of research animals available for adoption. But again, professionals, guided by care and safety standards, protocols, statutes and ethics are in the best position to determine whether a research animal can be rehabilitated and placed in a non-institutional setting. Those processes already exist.

With regards to HB 4882, the proposed legislation would add to the administrative burden of bioscience research institutions and companies, on top of what is already a highly regulated industry. The information sought, namely number of animals in research use is already shared with federal authorities as part of required filings and reviews. Besides, it’s unclear what purpose or impact such reporting will affect – what will the State of Michigan do with such data, already available from federal agencies? The penalties noted are thus particularly punitive given the intent for mere administrative filing.

For the above reasons, MichBio opposes further consideration of HB 4881 and 4882.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Rapundalo". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Stephen Rapundalo, PhD
President and CEO