

Study Recommends the Baltimore County Police K-9 Facility Stay Closed

Questions remain about the cancer deaths of two police dogs last year.

The Baltimore County police K-9 facility, which was shut down last year after the cancer deaths of police dogs, should remain closed until lingering questions about its safety are answered, according to a new study.

The report, commissioned by the county police union, was released Thursday, May 4, and comes three months after a county study found no environmental links between the facility and the deaths of the dogs.

The study, by officials at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, describes the cancer death rate of dogs that had spent time in the county facility to be remarkably higher than the rates of 11 other K-9 units in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

The new report says that information from earlier studies, along with reasonable assumptions, suggest unacceptable risks to workers at the site.

Cole Weston, president of the Baltimore County Fraternal Order of Police, said the study confirms the unions suspicion that the facility is unsafe.

He added that the union is willing to meet with county officials to discuss alternative sites for the unit.

In January, county officials said tests on soil and groundwater showed that the site and surrounding Southwest Area Park pose no health risks to officers or dogs. Yesterday, David A.C. Carroll, county environmental chief, issued a statement saying that extensive tests were conducted before the facility was built.

In September, county police closed the facility after two dogs died and about 30 employees filed injury reports with the department, some complaining of headaches, dizziness, and respiratory problems.

In all, four police dogs have recently died of cancer, according to the police union.

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