



House Bill 824

Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Data - Collection and Distribution

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 16, 2022

From: D'Paul Nibber

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 824 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill would, among other provisions, require the judiciary to collect, compile, and share eviction data with the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, and to State agencies and academic institutions upon request. Counties seek an amendment to ensure their relevant agencies may also receive this vital information.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Maryland has experienced a record number of evictions. To stabilize the housing market, counties have been relied upon to distribute federal emergency rental assistance to qualified tenants experiencing financial distress. County agencies have worked diligently to ensure this assistance is provided in a timely manner. According to Maryland's Emergency Rental Assistance Program Dashboard, a total of over 70,000 applications for rental assistance have been processed with over 40,000 households having received assistance.

Although eviction rates appear to be slowing, county officials remain concerned about eviction filings climbing as the judiciary lifts COVID-related precautions and dockets begin to clear. The best means to adequately safeguard against a potential acceleration in eviction rates is for counties to have access to filing data from the judiciary. MACo offers the following amendment allowing for such access:

- On page 2, line 19, after "AGENCY" insert "LOCAL AGENCY".

The above amendment would ensure the State and its counties could both take swift action to ensure housing stability among Marylanders. For this reason, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report for HB 824.