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MAYOR

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HB0976

March 3, 2023

TO: Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Interim Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 976 – Mold Assessment and Remediation - Standards
POSITION: Support

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 976.

HB 976 sets up a collaboration of State agencies to develop uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation. The negative health impacts of mold affect the lives of many Baltimore City residents. This is especially true for people with asthma, which can be exacerbated by mold. Uniform standards would bring clarity to this very complicated issue, for which there is currently no federal regulation. Established standards could be relied upon to determine at what point it becomes necessary to engage remediation professionals to mitigate mold hazards.

Asthma is a significant health issue in Baltimore City. According to the 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey, one-third of Baltimore City high school students self-report being diagnosed with asthma.¹ Baltimore City has the highest rate of emergency department visits for asthma out of all 24 Maryland jurisdictions (201.4/10,000 population).² As a known asthma trigger, mold has the potential to both exacerbate as well as possibly cause asthma in children.³ Protecting the health of residents is of critical importance to City government.

Established standards for assessment and remediation of mold would bring Maryland in line with Washington, D.C., Virginia, and Massachusetts, all of which address mold specifically when noting habitability issues in rental dwellings. As there is no City agency with expertise in mold, these standards would be used by an independent assessment company to guide their recommendations for residents/property owners on when they should engage a remediation company. To protect consumers and avoid any conflicts of interest, we would encourage a separation between mold assessment and mold remediation companies as has been typical in other jurisdictions.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on HB 976.

¹ Maryland Department of Health. (2019). 2018 Youth Risk Behavior Survey Results: Maryland High School Survey – Baltimore City. Retrieved from

<https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/Reports/Documents/2018%20YRBS%20YTS%20Reports/Baltimore%20City/2018MDHS26%20Detail%20Tables.pdf>

² Maryland Department of Health. (n.d.). Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Asthma. Retrieved from <https://maps.health.maryland.gov/ephtportal/asthma/status/EDRates#close>

³ Fields, H. (2012). Household Molds Linked to Childhood Asthma. National Institutes for Health. Retrieved from <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/nih-research-matters/household-molds-linked-childhood-asthma>