



# Montgomery County

## Office of Intergovernmental Relations

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HB 79

DATE: January 27, 2023

SPONSOR: Delegate Stewart

ASSIGNED TO: Environment and Transportation Committee

CONTACT PERSON: Garrett Fitzgerald (garrett.fitzgerald@montgomerycountymd.gov)

POSITION: Favorable (Department of Environmental Protection)

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### Housing and Community Development – Whole-Home Repairs Act of 2023

This bill will establish a Whole-Home Repairs Program within the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to help ensure owner-occupied and rental units are free of habitability concerns; improve coordination across home repair programs; and increase retention in workforce development programs. The program will allow local administering agencies in each county to utilize grants provided by the program to:

1. Provide financial assistance to residential property owners to address habitability concerns; improve energy or water efficiency; and make units accessible for individuals with disabilities.
2. Invest in workforce development programs that will support trainees and connect them to jobs related to improving habitability and performance of residential properties.
3. Offset the costs of administering the program in coordination with related programs.

This bill has the potential to benefit thousands of Maryland families. It will strengthen our communities by helping families to stay in their homes with lower energy bills and potentially lower healthcare costs. It will enable property owners to access funding to make critical repairs, and in doing so will enable many more families to take advantage of DHCD's existing programs.

Weatherization helps residents by increasing the energy efficiency of their homes, lowering energy bills and improving comfort while ensuring health and safety. We understand from DHCD staff that each year between 35 and 50 percent of the families who apply for weatherization assistance through DHCD are denied support until critical and often costly repairs are made to their properties – repairs these families often cannot afford to make. This bill will help more families to complete those repairs and receive the benefits of weatherization.

We respectfully request that the Environment and Transportation Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 79.