



House Bill 245

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: January 31, 2024

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members house more than 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA's membership consists of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities and more than 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

In relevant part, House Bill 245 ("HB 245") doubles the annual cost for residential rental units to register with the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) Lead Rental Registry. HB 245 increases the individual unit cost from \$30 per year to \$60 per year, which would be paid on a two-year basis. Additionally, HB 245 increases the fee for a lead free report to MDE from \$10 to \$50.

The Lead Rental Registry fee only applies to rental properties that were built prior to 1978, which generally comprise much of Maryland's naturally occurring affordable housing. According to the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, Maryland currently lacks more than 100,000 affordable housing units. **As a result, the increased fees proposed in House Bill 245 would increase the cost of housing for Maryland's residents and further contribute to Maryland's shortage of affordable housing units.**

MMHA supports the goal of MDE's Lead Rental Registry and believes that the program is beneficial to the public. As such, MMHA would support increased funding for MDE's program in the state budget. Instead of raising fees on Maryland's most affordable housing units, MMHA encourages the General Assembly to allocate state funding in the budget, which includes significant tax revenue that is derived from the same properties that would be paying the increased fees set forth in HB 245. For this reason MMHA, encourages the committee to remove the fee increases on affordable housing from HB 245.

Please contact Grason Wiggins at (912) 687-5745 with any questions.