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Chairwoman, Board of Commissioners  
Janet Abrahams  
President / Chief Executive Officer



February 5, 2026

TO: Members of the Economic Matters Committee  
FROM: Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO   
RE: Bill 153 - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirements  
POSITION: Letter of Information

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Chair Kriselda, Vice Chair Lorig, and Members of the Economic Matters Committee, please be advised that the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) wishes to submit testimony on HB - 153 Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirement.






HB 153 requires a landlord to provide air-conditioning to certain residential rental units in a certain manner; and generally relating to air-conditioning requirements for residential rental units.

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) is one of the country's largest public housing authorities (PHAs) and Baltimore City's largest provider of affordable housing opportunities. HABC serves over 46,000 individuals in Baltimore City through its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCVP) programs. HABC's public housing inventory currently consists of approximately 6,000 units located at various developments and scattered sites throughout the city. HABC is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is subject to federal regulation that pertain to the operation of its housing programs.

Our public housing residents and HCVP participants consist of some of the city's most vulnerable populations, including those at risk of homelessness, the elderly, people with disabilities, veterans and families with children. HABC supports this bill's effort to address public health and safety issues related to extreme heat and rising temperatures and to protect at-risk populations from heat-related illnesses.

HABC is in the process of redeveloping a portion of its public housing sites, and the new residential units constructed through these redevelopment plans include central air conditioning that meet the requirements of this bill. However, due to the aging infrastructure at our remaining sites, which are on average over 80 years old, that are not currently undergoing redevelopment, a complete overhaul would be needed to support the installation of central air conditioning at an enormous cost. Further, HUD has specific requirements about how public housing units are to be maintained, and all Public Housing Authorities must comply with these requirements. HUD regulations do not require housing authorities to provide or install air conditioning units for residents. Therefore, we appreciate the provisions in the bill excluding rental units that are part of HABC's older public housing developments and scattered sites.

Respectfully submitted.

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