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**STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
HOUSING UNIT**

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February 3, 2026

To: The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn, Assistant Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 153 –Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirement
(SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 153 sponsored by Delegates Lehman, Pena-Melnyk, Ruth, Stewart, and Terrasa. House Bill 153 would (a) require newly constructed residential rental units to provide air conditioning from June to October and (b) expand requirements to provide air conditioning from June to October to existing residential rental units only after those units undergo voluntary renovations.

Landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division, including complaints about when and if landlords are required to provide air conditioning to renters. Presently, Maryland landlords are not required to provide access to air conditioning in rental units like they are required to provide heat in cold weather months. As excessive and prolonged heat waves proliferate, access to air conditioning provides important protections to our most vulnerable populations, including the elderly and young children.¹ House Bill 153 provides reasonable steps to expand access to air conditioning in rental units as our

¹ See R. Sari Kovats and Shakoor Hajat, “Heat Stress and Public Health: A Critical Review,” Annual Review of Public Health 2008 29:1, 41-55 at 48 (“U.S. studies indicate that air conditioning is an important protective factor for heat-related mortality...Lack of air conditioning may explain the risk of heat stroke in poor urban elderly persons in some U.S. inner cities...”, available here: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.29.020907.090843>).

climate warms, and would assist the Division in mediating consumer complaints concerning apartments that are excessively hot during the summer.

Accordingly, the Division requests that the Economic Matters Committee give House Bill 153 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Mary Lehman, *et al.*
Members, Economic Matters Committee