

## CHAPTER 289

(House Bill 502)

AN ACT concerning

### **Ground Rents – Notices Regarding Ground Leases on Residential Property**

FOR the purpose of requiring a leasehold tenant under a certain ground lease to notify the ~~landlord~~ ground lease holder of any change of address of the leasehold tenant within a certain time period; altering the method by which a leasehold tenant is required to give certain notices to a ground lease holder; requiring a ~~landlord~~ ground lease holder under a certain ground lease to mail to the leasehold tenant a bill for the payment of ground rent due no later than a certain amount of time before the payment is due; requiring the bill sent by the ~~landlord~~ ground lease holder to include a certain notice regarding the ground lease and the rights and responsibilities of the leasehold tenant under the ground lease; altering the notice requirements contained in a contract for the sale of real property that is subject to a certain ground rent to include a certain notice regarding the ground lease and the rights and responsibilities of the leasehold tenant under the ground lease; defining certain terms; providing for the application of the provisions of this Act; making stylistic changes; and generally relating to notices regarding ground leases on residential property.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,  
 Article – Real Property  
 Section 14–116 and 14–117(a)  
 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 (2003 Replacement Volume and 2006 Supplement)

BY adding to  
 Article – Real Property  
 Section 14–116.1  
 Annotated Code of Maryland  
 (2003 Replacement Volume and 2006 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

#### **Article – Real Property**

14-116.

~~(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.~~

~~(2) "GROUND LEASE" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL LEASE OR SUBLEASE IN EFFECT ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2007, THAT HAS AN INITIAL TERM OF 99 YEARS RENEWABLE FOREVER AND IS SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF AN ANNUAL GROUND RENT.~~

~~(3) "GROUND RENT" MEANS A RENT ISSUING OUT OF, OR COLLECTIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH, THE REVERSION IN FEE SIMPLE RESERVED IN A GROUND LEASE.~~

~~(4) "LANDLORD" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.~~

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) "GROUND LEASE" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL LEASE OR SUBLEASE FOR A TERM OF YEARS RENEWABLE FOREVER SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF A PERIODIC GROUND RENT.

(3) (I) "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(II) "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" INCLUDES AN AGENT OF THE GROUND LEASE HOLDER.

(4) "GROUND RENT" MEANS A RENT ISSUING OUT OF, OR COLLECTIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH, THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(5) "LEASEHOLD INTEREST" MEANS THE TENANCY IN REAL PROPERTY CREATED UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(6) "LEASEHOLD TENANT" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE LEASEHOLD INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

**(B) (1) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THAT WAS OR IS USED, INTENDED TO BE USED, OR AUTHORIZED TO BE USED FOR FOUR OR FEWER DWELLING UNITS.**

**(2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO PROPERTY:**

**(I) LEASED FOR BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, MANUFACTURING, MERCANTILE, OR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, OR ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAT IS NOT PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL;**

**(II) IMPROVED OR TO BE IMPROVED BY ANY APARTMENT, CONDOMINIUM, COOPERATIVE, OR OTHER BUILDING FOR MULTIFAMILY USE OF GREATER THAN FOUR DWELLING UNITS; OR**

**(III) LEASED FOR DWELLINGS OR MOBILE HOMES THAT ARE ERECTED OR PLACED IN A MOBILE HOME DEVELOPMENT OR MOBILE HOME PARK.**

~~(B)~~ **(C) WITHIN 30 DAYS OF ANY CHANGE OF ADDRESS OF A LEASEHOLD TENANT, THE LEASEHOLD TENANT SHALL NOTIFY THE LANDLORD GROUND LEASE HOLDER OF THE CHANGE, INCLUDING THE NEW ADDRESS AND THE DATE OF THE CHANGE.**

~~(C)~~ **(D) Within 30 days of any transfer of improvements located on property subject to a ground rent, the transferor LEASEHOLD TENANT shall notify the [holder of the reversionary interest] LANDLORD GROUND LEASE HOLDER of the transfer. The notification shall include the name and address of the transferee, and date of transfer.**

~~(D)~~ **(E) [Notice shall be given] A TRANSFEROR LEASEHOLD TENANT SHALL GIVE SEND NOTICE UNDER THIS SECTION by certified mail, return receipt requested, bearing a postmark from the United States Postal Service, to the last known address of the [holder of the reversionary interest] LANDLORD GROUND LEASE HOLDER.**

**14-116.1.**

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~~(2) "GROUND LEASE" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL LEASE OR SUBLEASE IN EFFECT ON OR AFTER OCTOBER 1, 2007, THAT HAS AN INITIAL TERM OF 99 YEARS RENEWABLE FOREVER AND IS SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF AN ANNUAL GROUND RENT.~~

~~(3) "GROUND RENT" MEANS A RENT ISSUING OUT OF, OR COLLECTIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH, THE REVERSION IN FEE SIMPLE RESERVED IN A GROUND LEASE.~~

~~(4) "LANDLORD" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.~~

~~(5) "TENANT" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE LEASEHOLD INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.~~

(A) (1) IN THIS SECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(2) "GROUND LEASE" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL LEASE OR SUBLEASE FOR A TERM OF YEARS RENEWABLE FOREVER SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF A PERIODIC GROUND RENT.

(3) (I) "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(II) "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" INCLUDES AN AGENT OF THE GROUND LEASE HOLDER.

(4) "GROUND RENT" MEANS A RENT ISSUING OUT OF, OR COLLECTIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH, THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(5) "LEASEHOLD INTEREST" MEANS THE TENANCY IN REAL PROPERTY CREATED UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

(6) "LEASEHOLD TENANT" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE LEASEHOLD INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.

**(B) (1) THIS SECTION APPLIES TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THAT WAS OR IS USED, INTENDED TO BE USED, OR AUTHORIZED TO BE USED FOR FOUR OR FEWER DWELLING UNITS.**

**(2) THIS SECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO PROPERTY:**

**(I) LEASED FOR BUSINESS, COMMERCIAL, MANUFACTURING, MERCANTILE, OR INDUSTRIAL PURPOSES, OR ANY OTHER PURPOSE THAT IS NOT PRIMARILY RESIDENTIAL;**

**(II) IMPROVED OR TO BE IMPROVED BY ANY APARTMENT, CONDOMINIUM, COOPERATIVE, OR OTHER BUILDING FOR MULTIFAMILY USE OF GREATER THAN FOUR DWELLING UNITS; OR**

**(III) LEASED FOR DWELLINGS OR MOBILE HOMES THAT ARE ERECTED OR PLACED IN A MOBILE HOME DEVELOPMENT OR MOBILE HOME PARK.**

~~(B)~~ **(C) NO LATER THAN 60 DAYS BEFORE A YEARLY OR HALF-YEARLY INSTALLMENT PAYMENT OF A GROUND RENT IS DUE, A ~~LANDLORD~~ GROUND LEASE HOLDER SHALL MAIL TO THE LAST KNOWN ADDRESS OF THE LEASEHOLD TENANT A BILL FOR THE PAYMENT DUE.**

~~(C)~~ **(D) THE BILL SHALL INCLUDE A NOTICE IN BOLDFACE TYPE, AT LEAST AS LARGE AS 14 POINT, IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FOLLOWING FORM:**

**“NOTICE REQUIRED BY MARYLAND LAW  
REGARDING YOUR GROUND RENT**

**THIS PROPERTY (ADDRESS) IS SUBJECT TO A GROUND LEASE. THE ANNUAL PAYMENT ON THE GROUND LEASE (“GROUND RENT”) IS \$(DOLLAR AMOUNT), PAYABLE IN YEARLY OR HALF-YEARLY INSTALLMENTS ON (DATE OR DATES).**

**THE NEXT GROUND RENT PAYMENT IS DUE (DAY, MONTH, YEAR) IN THE AMOUNT OF \$(DOLLAR AMOUNT).**

**THE PAYMENT OF THE GROUND RENT SHOULD BE SENT TO:**

**(NAME OF GROUND ~~RENT-OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER)  
(ADDRESS)  
(PHONE NUMBER)**

**NOTE REGARDING YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER MARYLAND LAW:**

AS THE OWNER OF THIS PROPERTY, YOU ARE OBLIGATED TO PAY THE GROUND RENT TO THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER. IT IS ALSO YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS OR TRANSFER OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY.

IF YOU FAIL TO PAY THE GROUND RENT ON TIME, YOU ARE STILL RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING THE GROUND RENT. IN ADDITION, ~~IF THE GROUND RENT OWNER LEASE HOLDER FILES AN ACTION IN COURT~~ MAY TAKE ACTION TO COLLECT THE PAST DUE GROUND RENT, ~~YOU MAY BE REQUIRED TO PAY THE GROUND RENT OWNER FOR FEES AND COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE COLLECTION OF THE PAST DUE GROUND RENT. MOREOVER, THE GROUND RENT OWNER MAY ALSO FILE AN ACTION IN COURT TO TAKE POSSESSION OF THE PROPERTY~~ WHICH MAY RESULT IN YOUR BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR ADDITIONAL FEES AND COSTS AND ULTIMATELY IN YOUR LOSS OF THE PROPERTY. PLEASE NOTE THAT UNDER MARYLAND LAW, A GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER MAY DEMAND NOT MORE THAN 3 YEARS OF PAST DUE GROUND RENT, ~~AND THERE ARE LIMITS ON HOW MUCH A GROUND RENT OWNER MAY BE REIMBURSED FOR SOME OF THE FEES AND COSTS.~~ IF YOU FAIL TO PAY THE GROUND RENT ON TIME, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER FOR ADVICE.

AS THE OWNER OF THIS PROPERTY, YOU ARE ENTITLED ~~TO OFFER TO PURCHASE REDEEM, OR PURCHASE,~~ THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE FROM THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER AND OBTAIN ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY. THE REDEMPTION AMOUNT IS FIXED BY LAW BUT MAY ALSO BE NEGOTIATED WITH THE GROUND LEASE HOLDER FOR A DIFFERENT AMOUNT. FOR INFORMATION ON ~~PURCHASING~~ REDEEMING THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE, CONTACT THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER. IF THE IDENTITY OF THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER IS UNKNOWN, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION PROVIDES A PROCESS TO REDEEM THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE THAT MAY RESULT IN YOUR OBTAINING ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THIS PROPERTY, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER FOR ADVICE.”.

14-117.

(a) **(1) (I) IN THIS SUBSECTION THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.**

**(II) "GROUND LEASE" MEANS A RESIDENTIAL LEASE OR SUBLEASE FOR A TERM OF YEARS RENEWABLE FOREVER SUBJECT TO THE PAYMENT OF A PERIODIC GROUND RENT.**

**(III) 1. "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.**

**2. "GROUND LEASE HOLDER" INCLUDES AN AGENT OF THE GROUND LEASE HOLDER.**

**(IV) "GROUND RENT" MEANS A RENT ISSUING OUT OF, OR COLLECTIBLE IN CONNECTION WITH, THE REVERSIONARY INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.**

**(V) "LEASEHOLD INTEREST" MEANS THE TENANCY IN REAL PROPERTY CREATED UNDER A GROUND LEASE.**

**(VI) "LEASEHOLD TENANT" MEANS THE HOLDER OF THE LEASEHOLD INTEREST UNDER A GROUND LEASE.**

**(2) (I) THIS SUBSECTION APPLIES TO RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY THAT WAS OR IS USED, INTENDED TO BE USED, OR AUTHORIZED TO BE USED FOR FOUR OR FEWER DWELLING UNITS.**

**(II) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO PROPERTY:**

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**3. LEASED FOR DWELLINGS OR MOBILE HOMES THAT ARE ERECTED OR PLACED IN A MOBILE HOME DEVELOPMENT OR MOBILE HOME PARK.**

**(3)** A contract for the sale of real property subject to a ground rent shall contain the following[:

(1) Notice of the existence of the ground rent; and

(2) Notice that if the ground rent is not timely paid the effect may be:

(i) That the reversionary owner of the ground rent may bring an action for possession against the ground rent tenant under § 8–402.2 of this article; and

(ii) As a result of the action for possession, the reversionary owner of the ground rent may own the property in fee, discharged from the lease.] **NOTICE IN BOLDFACE TYPE, AT LEAST AS LARGE AS 14 POINT, IN SUBSTANTIALLY THE FOLLOWING FORM:**

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**(ADDRESS)**

**(PHONE NUMBER)**

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**RESPONSIBILITY TO NOTIFY THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER IF YOU CHANGE YOUR ADDRESS OR TRANSFER OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY.**

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**AS THE OWNER OF THIS PROPERTY, YOU ARE ENTITLED ~~TO OFFER TO PURCHASE REDEEM, OR PURCHASE,~~ THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE FROM THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER AND OBTAIN ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY. THE REDEMPTION AMOUNT IS FIXED BY LAW BUT MAY ALSO BE NEGOTIATED WITH THE GROUND LEASE HOLDER FOR A DIFFERENT AMOUNT. FOR INFORMATION ON ~~PURCHASING REDEEMING~~ THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE, CONTACT THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER. IF THE IDENTITY OF THE GROUND ~~RENT OWNER~~ LEASE HOLDER IS UNKNOWN, THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF ASSESSMENTS AND TAXATION PROVIDES A PROCESS TO REDEEM THE GROUND ~~RENT~~ LEASE THAT MAY RESULT IN YOUR OBTAINING ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THE PROPERTY. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO OBTAIN ABSOLUTE OWNERSHIP OF THIS PROPERTY, YOU SHOULD CONTACT A LAWYER FOR ADVICE.”.**

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect ~~October~~ July 1, 2007.

**Approved by the Governor, May 8, 2007.**