



## House Bill 581

Committee: Economic Matters  
Date: February 5, 2021  
Position: **Favorable with Amendments**

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This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 581 requires essential employers within certain industries and sectors, including property maintenance companies, to provide hazard pay, establish certain working conditions, develop a health emergency preparedness plan, and provide paid leave and health insurance among other requirements.

The unprecedented COVID-19 pandemic has created extensive challenges for Maryland's housing industry. Throughout the pandemic, MMHA's members have taken extraordinary steps to protect their workforce and ensure that all employees are operating in a sound and safe manner. Many of our employees live at the properties in which they work, receiving free or reduced rent as additional compensation. Due to the unique factors associated with work in our industry, MMHA is concerned that HB 581 will create unintended consequences for Maryland's housing industry. As one example, the bill requires worksites to be evacuated under certain circumstances, but our worksites are residential complexes. For this reason, MMHA offers the following options for amending the bill:

### **AMENDMENT NO. 1**

On page 5, line 5, strike “(x) BUILDING, AND PROPERTY MAINTENANCE COMPANIES.”

OR

### **AMENDMENT NO. 1**

On page 4, line 11, insert “(3) IN THIS SUBTITLE, ESSENTIAL EMPLOYERS DO NOT INCLUDE ENTITIES AS DESCRIBED IN THE NORTH AMERICAN INDUSTRY CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM SECTOR 53.”

Further, MMHA is concerned about increased expenses associated with the bill being passed onto the housing industry through 3rd party contractors. MMHA looks forward to working with the sponsor on HB 581 to address concerns regarding increased expenses and any unintended consequences that may impact Maryland's housing industry or housing costs.