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February 19, 2021

To: The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 1220 – Landlord and Tenant – Cancellation or Renewal of Lease –
Notification Requirement (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General supports House Bill 1220 sponsored by Delegate Frank M. Conaway, Jr.

House Bill 1220 requires landlords who send a notice of non-renewal to a tenant via email to also send the notice of non-renewal to the tenant by first class mail within five (5) days of the email notification. Maryland law currently requires landlords to provide tenants written notice should the landlord decided not to renew a lease but is silent as to how such written notice must be provided, *e.g.*, by email, regular or certified mail, or hand-delivery. Requiring landlords who chose to provide the required notice via email to also provide the required notice by first class mail ensures that consumers receive the notice.

While email is a convenient method of communication for many consumers. Important and required notices sent only by email may never reach a tenant. For example, not all consumers regularly check personal email accounts. Emails can inadvertently be filtered into spam folders preventing receipt. The notice could be lost in a deluge of other emails. Or consumers may change email accounts during a tenancy and inadvertently forget to update a landlord. As such, providing notice by both email and first-class mail ensures the notice is not missed or overlooked; thus, providing such consumers ample opportunity to search for and secure alternative housing.

For these reasons, the Division requests that the Environment and Transportation Committee give House Bill 1220 a favorable report.

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cc: The Honorable Frank M. Conaway, Jr.
Members, Environment and Transportation Committee