



Senate Bill 462, Public Utilities – Low-Income Housing – Energy Performance Targets

Committee: Finance
Date: February 16, 2021
Position: Favorable with Amendment

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 556,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

Under Senate Bill 462, the Public Service Commission must require the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to procure or provide electricity for certain customers by developing a plan to coordinate funding sources and leverage the greatest funding possible to support health and safety upgrades, weatherization, energy efficiency, and other general maintenance for low-income housing. Senate Bill 462 also creates a Green and Healthy Task Force to advance utilizing resources more effectively to deliver green and healthy housing for low-income communities, develop policy recommendations to eliminate barriers from low-income households achieving healthy, energy-efficient, and affordable housing. The bill also directs funding to be used by DHCD to provide low-income residential weatherization as part of the electric universal service program beginning in fiscal year 2022.

MMHA supports this bill's goal of achieving green and healthy housing for low-income households. As providers of both market-rate affordable and government-subsidized affordable housing, MMHA members witness firsthand the extraordinary burden that utility costs place on renters. At the same time, market-rate affordable housing commonly exists in older buildings, much of which requires expensive weatherization improvements that could increase housing costs. To ensure that the Task Force understands the complexities that providers of low-income housing experience, MMHA worked with the House sponsor of the bill's cross-file to request the following amendment:

On page 7, in line 22, after “(VI)” insert “**ONE MEMBER WHO OWNS OR DEVELOPS AFFORDABLE HOUSING;**

(VII)”;

and in line 24, strike “(VII)” and substitute “(VIII)”.

We appreciate the sponsor's introduction of Senate Bill 462 and we support the intent of the legislation. MMHA respectfully requests a favorable report from the committee with MMHA's amendment for Senate Bill 462.

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