



January 22, 2021

Dear Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

Since last February, the multifamily real estate industry has worked tirelessly to follow and share public health guidance to provide our tenants with the best service possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. As essential workers, our staff members have been on the frontline ensuring our buildings operate safely for everyone, and we have been tasked with trying to enforce a variety of new public health guidelines in the shared spaces within our buildings. We have additionally been limited in our ability to address violations to these and other rules through the appropriate legal process, due to Court scheduling limitations and other legal limitations put in place to reduce the spread of the virus. While we are proud that so many residents heeded these public health guidelines, we worry that without adequate protections, we may be held liable for those few who failed to heed these new rules.

This last year has been particularly difficult for companies like ours, with assets spread across multiple jurisdictions, given the range of guidelines that were being issued by state and local leaders, and the pace with which these changes were made in the past year. We have worked diligently to follow all applicable guidelines in each of our jurisdictions while adapting to the new working environment and have invested heavily in personal protective equipment for our staff, disinfectants for our cleaning staff, virtual options for submitting maintenance requests and paying rent, as well as implementing a number of new community rules per public health officials.

Many other jurisdictions have, in one form or another, provided reasonable liability protections for companies like ours which worked in good faith to implement critical public health guidelines during this time. Unfortunately, Maryland has not yet provided such reassurance. We therefore ask that you support Senate Bill 210 concerning COVID-19 Claim—Civil Liability to give us a bit more certainty as our industry continues to recover from the impacts of COVID-19. Given the sheer volume of emergency legislation and public health guidance that has impacted our industry over the past year, we are concerned that without such protection, we could face spurious, but costly, legal action in the coming years.

Our goal as an industry has always been to operate on a fair and honest basis with all our tenants, employees, vendors and investors, regardless of the market uncertainties surrounding our industry. We hope that Senate Bill 210 can be passed to help increase our certainty as we move forward.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Luke Lanciano", is written over a horizontal line.

Luke Lanciano
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