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To: The Honorable William C. Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 451 – Real Property – Residential Rental Property Inspection – Remote Video
Inspection (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General submits the following written testimony in support of House Bill 451. This bill provides for remote visual inspections of residential rental property during a protracted state of emergency declared by the Governor or a severe weather event which renders an in-person inspection inadvisable.

Inspections are often necessary when there is a problem with a rental property causing hazardous conditions to exist. However, during the pandemic, such inspections have been complicated by the desire of individuals to be safe in their property and the availability of inspectors who are willing to enter a residence. The Consumer Protection Division received many calls during the current pandemic in which tenants expressed concerns about admitting a landlord and/or his agent into their property. These calls are difficult due to the conflicting concerns, which are reasonable on the part of each party.

This bill directs local jurisdictions with the assistance of the Maryland Department of Labor to adopt regulations calculated to permit remote visual inspections that are substantially comparable to on-site visits. Having the ability to conduct inspections remotely ensures that inspections of hazardous conditions can be conducted safely and fairly while initiating the repair process without delay.

For these reasons, we ask that the Judicial Proceedings Committee return a favorable report on this bill.

cc: Members, Environment and Transportation Committee