



HB 674: Landlord and Tenant – Stay of Eviction Proceeding for Rental Assistance Determination

*House Environment and Transportation Committee
Hearing on February 22, 2022*

Our Maryland urges a favorable report on HB 674, with sponsor amendments that conform to the cross-filed SB 384. Launched in 2017, Our Maryland is a nonprofit, multi-issue hub for promoting a just and sustainable future for all Marylanders. Our Maryland currently has close to 55,000 Facebook followers and 14,000 email subscribers from across the state, who care deeply about putting in place fair and efficient housing protections for our most vulnerable families.

Maryland has unprecedented funding to prevent evictions. Yet, in the second half of 2021, there were nearly 27,000 eviction cases filed for non-payment of rent and more than 700 households evicted *per month*. HB 674 would provide courts with the statutory authority to stay eviction proceedings, on a case-by-case basis, if a judge determines that a good faith rental assistance application to resolve the debt is pending. *No Marylander should be evicted when there is rental assistance pending to pay the rent – especially during an ongoing pandemic.*

HB 674 would help in many other ways. It would incentivize landlords who are not currently accepting rental assistance to do so, and thus help to resolve and reduce the overall number of cases. For all stakeholders, HB 674 would help to prioritize and triage among the large number of cases by identifying those that may be resolved through pending emergency rental assistance applications.

While HB 674 would establish a best practice, Maryland would not be blazing a new trail. [At least 16 other state and local jurisdictions have enacted protections for tenants who have applied for rental assistance by temporarily staying the eviction process.](#) Additionally, some states have issued guidance that landlords who refuse rental assistance violate the state's source of income law.

Our Maryland is part of the Renters United Maryland coalition and, for all of the above reasons, urges the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 674 with sponsor amendments.

Thank you.

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