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February 18, 2022

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

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn, Assistant Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 932 – Landlord and Tenant – Right to Redemption of Leased Premises –
Form of Payment (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 932 sponsored by Delegate Vaughn Stewart. House Bill 932 would assist the collective efforts of state and federal leaders to stymy the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on renter households by acknowledging rental assistance funds from a government entity as valid funds to redeem a rental property after a warrant of restitution was issued but not executed.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to financially impact renters resulting in housing instability for renter households across Maryland. Through the CARES Act and the American Rescue Plan, the federal government has awarded Maryland over \$250 million dollars in rental assistance and eviction prevention funds.¹ Notwithstanding, the Division has received repeated complaints from consumers, advocates, and rental assistance program administrators that many Maryland landlords are refusing to accept rental assistance funds awarded to eligible renters. Instead, many Maryland landlords are evicting vulnerable renters who have been negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. House Bill 932 will assist rental relief assistance providers in successfully distributing Maryland’s share of the federal rental assistance funds and bolster housing stability for Maryland renter households as the COVID-19 pandemic’s deleterious effects persist.

¹See <https://governor.maryland.gov/2021/03/17/governor-hogan-submits-1-08-billion-supplemental-budget-focused-on-rental-assistance-higher-education-and-transportation/> .

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Accordingly, the Division requests that the Environment and Transportation Committee give House Bill 932 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Vaughn Stewart
Members, Environment and Transportation Committee