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**OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL**  
**CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION**

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March 31, 2022

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

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

**Re:** House Bill 552 – Real Property - Residential Leases - Notification of Rent Increases  
(SUPPORT)

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The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 551 sponsored by Delegate Melissa Wells, which would apply to residential leases for a term of at least one year and require a landlord to notify a tenant in writing or through email at least 90 days before increasing the tenant’s rent by more than 4%.

Landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division. Currently, landlords are not required to provide any existing tenants with prior notice of the landlord’s intent to increase the monthly rent at lease renewal. As a result, tenants often face unexpected and untenable rent increases with little time to negotiate the amount of the rent increase with their current landlord or to find alternative and affordable housing.<sup>1</sup> House Bill 551’s requirement that a landlord notify a tenant in writing or through email at least 90 days before increasing the tenant’s rent by more than 4% provides residential tenants important information that would permit them to either negotiate the amount of the rent increase or to seek alternative, affordable housing if the amount of the rent increase is untenable. If a landlord is raising the rent significantly, it is essential that the tenant have time to respond appropriately to that increase.

The Division requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee give House Bill 551 a favorable report.

**cc:** The Honorable Mary A. Lehman  
Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

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<sup>1</sup> In contrast, a landlord is required to provide a tenant with a year-to-year lease at least 90 days’ notice of the landlord’s intent not to renew the lease. *See* Real Property § 8-402(c)(2)(ii).