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February 14, 2022

To: The Honorable Luke Clippinger
Chair, Judiciary Committee

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

Re: House Bill 824 – Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Data - Collection and Distribution
(SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 824 sponsored by Delegates Nicole A. Williams and Jen Terrasa. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Attorney General’s Access to Justice Commission (“Task Force”) sought to ensure Marylanders are housed, economically secure, and have access to the civil justice system.¹ The Task Force recognized that robust data collection and reporting is needed to allow for “targeted intervention for eviction prevention and diversion efforts”, and recommended the judiciary and the Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”) collect and report eviction data. *See Report at 31.*

House Bill 824 would require the judiciary to collect, compile and share with DHCD complete eviction data every two weeks for each warrant of restitution or writ of possession issued in accordance with a judgment for possession of residential property entered under Real Property Article, Title 7, Subtitle 1, §§ 8-401 through 8-402.2, or §14-132, including: the property location; the execution date of the warrant or writ; and the type of action from which the warrant or writ was executed. House Bill 824 would require DHCD to organize and publish the data on its website, make the data available on request by State agencies or academic institutions, and submit an annual report to the Governor. Collecting and reporting eviction data benefits consumers because it allows the State to target communities most at risk of eviction and housing instability for additional supports and diversion programs.

¹ See “Access to Justice Commission Final Report”
https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/A2JC%20Documents1/AG_Covid_A2J_TF_Report.pdf

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The Division requests that the Judiciary Committee give House Bill 824 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Nicole A. Williams
The Honorable Jen Terrasa
Members, Judiciary Committee