

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

CANDACE MCLAREN LANHAM
Chief of Staff

CAROLYN QUATTROCKI
Deputy Attorney General



WILLIAM D. GRUHN
Chief
Consumer Protection Division

Writer's Fax No.

STATE OF MARYLAND
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION

Writer's Direct Dial No.
410-576-6986
kwilponewelborn@oag.state.md.us

February 3, 2023

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

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

Re: House Bill 151 – Real Property - Residential Leases - Notification of Rent Increases
(SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 151 sponsored by Delegate Melissa Wells, which applies to residential leases for a term of at least one year and requires a landlord to notify a tenant in writing or through email at least 120 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.¹ House Bill 151’s requirement that a landlord notify a tenant in writing or through email at least 120 days before increasing the tenant’s rent by more than 4% provides residential tenants essential and material information that would permit them to either negotiate the amount of the rent increase or to seek alternative, affordable housing. 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 Environment and Transportation Committee give House Bill 151 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Melissa Wells
Members, Environment and Transportation Committee

¹ In contrast, a landlord is only 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).