

SHANEKA HENSON
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Anne Arundel County

Appropriations Committee



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 24, 2023

Chair Kumar P. Barve
Vice Chair Dana Stein
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

The impact of mold exposure has been linked to upper respiratory tract symptoms, coughing, wheezing, and the development or exacerbation of asthma. The risks of mold are even higher for children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised. And yet, no protections exist in Maryland state law to ensure that rental housing is free from mold. HB972 is part of a set of three bills that promote healthier and safer living environments for residential renters across our state by creating uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation, provisions to provide tenants relief through the State's rent escrow statute, and a tax credit to offset the cost to property owners wishing to provide healthy housing.

HB972 specifically focuses on offering tenants relief through the State's rent escrow statute. The purpose of the Maryland rent escrow statute is to provide tenants with a mechanism for encouraging the repair of serious and dangerous defects that exist within residential rental dwelling units. It provides a remedy and imposes an obligation upon landlords to repair and eliminate conditions and defects which constitute, or if not promptly corrected will constitute, a fire hazard or a serious and substantial threat to the life, health, or safety of occupants. These potential conditions are enumerated in the statute and include the existence of structural defects, infestation of rodents, and lack of adequate sewage disposal facilities. HB972 adds to the enumerated conditions "the existence of mold in a dwelling unit which presents a serious and substantial threat the health of occupants."

This bill helps to ensure that tenants can protect themselves from this dangerous hazard and that safe and healthy housing is accessible to everyone. Thank you for your consideration and I urge a favorable report on HB972.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shaneka Henson".

Delegate Shaneka Henson