



Baltimore City Delegation

Date: February 10, 2023

Bill: House Bill 303- Baltimore City - Air Conditioning in Residential Rental Units

Position: Unfavorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland.

House Bill (HB 303) requires housing providers in Baltimore City to provide air conditioning to its residents, if any resident in a unit is under 3 years, or over 65 years. In properties where the tenant controls the cooling system, the provider must supply an air conditioning system that can cool the space to at least 80 degrees. If the tenant does not control the cooling system, the housing provider must keep the unit cooled to at least 80 degrees.

While the bill attempts to limit the scope of applicability to certain residents, as a practical matter, HB 303 would require housing providers to equip all units with air conditioning capability given that resident demographics are fluid and constantly subject to change. This renders implementation of the bill very expensive, especially since many buildings in the city of Baltimore have older electrical systems and infrastructure.

For instance, one member reports that the recent installation of a ductless air conditioning system totaled nearly \$15,000 per unit, in a property with 219 units. Larger projects that require potential ductwork, mounting, cages, and additional electrical upgrades would carry additional costs. One might argue that window units could provide a more affordable solution, however, there is a concern about the ability to sufficiently cool every habitable space in the unit to standards prescribed by the bill, given that a window unit is only capable of cooling a limited square footage area.

For the aforementioned reasons, MMHA would request an unfavorable report on HB 303.

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