



Date: March 1, 2023

Committee: Judiciary

Bill: House Bill 757 – Real Property - Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings - Property for Sale or Lease

Position: Favorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose membership consists of owners and managers of more than 207,246 rental housing homes in more than 937 apartment communities. Our members house over 667,000 residents of the State of Maryland throughout the entire State of Maryland. MMHA membership also includes more than 216 associate members that supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry. More information is available at <https://www.mmhaonline.org/>

House Bill 757 (HB 757) requires the courts to expedite all hearings, rulings, appeals, and warrant executions in wrongful detainer cases if the property in question is actively listed for rent or sale. HB 757 addresses a growing problem with squatters and elaborate fraud schemes which negatively impact legitimate property owners, landlords, and real estate companies. According to policy guidance from the Baltimore City Police Department, some squatter cases simply involve a trespasser who has knowingly entered a residence looking for a place to stay without permission from the property owner. In this case, the trespasser can typically be removed from the property by law enforcement. However, other squatters may falsify leases, deeds, or other property records to provide fraudulent proof of residency to police. In these instances, property owners are referred to District Court, and in the interim, trespassers cannot be ejected from the property.¹

HB 757 will create a mechanism to allow property owners to swiftly reclaim the premises, so they can move forward with a legitimate sale or lease. As such, MMHA requests a favorable report on HB 757.

For more information, please contact Lauren C. Graziano, Senior Government Affairs Manager, 518.522.3529

¹ <https://www.baltimorepolice.org/transparency/bpd-policies/807-squatters-and-property-fraud-schemes>