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February 28, 2023

Delegate Vanessa E. Atterbeary, Chair  
Ways and Means Committee  
House of Delegates  
House Office Building, Room 131  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **HB965 - SUPPORT – Income Tax – Credit for Mold Remediation of Residential Rental Properties**

Dear Chairman Atterbeary and Members of the Committee:

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) writes in Support of House Bill 965. The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative has a long-standing history of advocating for families and children on the important issue of lead poisoning prevention and addressing healthy homes hazards such as mold. Across the State of Maryland, GHHI provides healthy homes education and direct housing intervention services to reduce triggers that cause asthma episodes and other respiratory issues in homes for children, adults and seniors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines mold as a fungus that can be found indoors and outdoors. Mold is most commonly found indoors in damp areas with poor ventilation such as bathrooms and basements. Mold exposure can cause or exacerbate many health issues such as: asthma, upper respiratory conditions and COPD<sup>1</sup>. The presence of mold is a well-established trigger of asthma episodes and contributes to other negative health conditions. Mold is a threat to life, health, and safety and occurs due to poor or inadequate ventilation, leaking roofs, water infiltration, missing gutters and downspouts, faulty plumbing and other conditions in rental homes that cause mold growth.

Over 500,000 children and adults in Maryland have been diagnosed with asthma. Asthma is the number one reason children missed days from schools and mold is a major trigger in homes. The societal costs directly correlate to 14.4 missed school days and 14.2 missed work days in the US annually due to asthma episodes. In Maryland, the state spends \$42.1 million annually for asthma related hospitalizations and \$93.3 million for asthma related emergency department visits. The need to address the problem and establish mold standards is at upmost importance to address asthma health disparities in Maryland where African American children are hospitalized due to asthma at rates 2.5 times higher than White children.

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<sup>1</sup> See CDC - Mold at <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>.

HB965 provides for financial assistance through up to \$10,000 in tax credits for rental property owners to pay for mold remediation where the owner may need other financial resources in order to conduct mold remediation using trained and certified contractors. It is critical that mold remediation is conducted by trained personnel that use safe work practices to protect the occupants of the rental property and the workers themselves and that proper clean-up is conducted..

Maryland tenants need to be protected from being exposed to mold hazards in rental properties. HB965 will better protect the health of Maryland citizens by providing financial incentives and resources for rental property owners to address mold hazards that are significant home-based environmental health hazards. We request a Favorable Report on HB965.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Ruth Ann Norton', written over a horizontal line.

Ruth Ann Norton  
President and CEO