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HB0199

February 6, 2024

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations
RE: House Bill 199 – Multifamily Dwellings - Smoking Policies
POSITION: Support

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** House Bill (HB) 199.

HB 199 requires the governing body of common ownership communities that house multiple families (such as a condominium) to develop a smoking policy that states where smoking is prohibited as well as how to file a complaint if the policy is broken. Smoking and second-hand smoke have significant negative health implications, especially for children and pregnant people. Having a clear smoking policy in common ownership communities will help reduce families' smoke exposure at home and provide critical information to people looking for a healthy place to reside.

Research shows that exposure to secondhand smoke plays a critical role in the development and severity of asthma in children.¹ Asthma is a significant health burden for Maryland residents, with almost a quarter of state high schoolers diagnosed with the condition.² This number is even higher in Baltimore City, where one-third of City high schoolers have asthma.ⁱⁱ Baltimore City residents also have an alarming rate of asthma-related emergency department visits, at 201.4/10,000 people.³ Exacerbated or poorly controlled asthma can greatly hamper children's lives, causing them to miss out on school attendance, sports and physical activity, and more.

Pregnant people and babies are also disproportionately affected by secondhand smoke exposure. According to the CDC, infants exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to die from Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS). Exposure to smoke for pregnant people increases the likelihood of giving birth prematurely and giving birth to babies with lower birth weights, both of which increases newborns' risk of additional health complications.^{4,5}

Protecting the lives and health of residents is of critical importance to City government. This bill would provide residents with the power to make healthier decisions for themselves and their families – and perhaps lead them to advocate for smoke-free policies.

For these reasons, the BCA respectfully request a **favorable** report on HB 199.

¹ Ogbu CE, Ogbu SC, Khadka D, Kirby RS. Childhood Asthma and Smoking: Moderating Effect of Preterm Status and Birth Weight. *Cureus*. 2021 Apr 17;13(4):e14536. doi: 10.7759/cureus.14536. PMID: 34017652; PMCID: PMC8128281.

² Maryland Department of Health. (n.d.) Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS) 2018-2019. Retrieved from <https://health.maryland.gov/phpa/ccdpc/Reports/Pages/YRBS2018.aspx>

³ Maryland Department of Health. (2023). Emergency Department (ED) Visits for Asthma. Retrieved from <https://maps.health.maryland.gov/ephtportal/asthma/status/EDRates#close/>

⁴ Rang, N. N., Hien, T. Q., Chanh, T. Q., & Thuyen, T. K. (2020). Preterm birth and secondhand smoking during pregnancy: A case-control study from Vietnam. *PloS one*, 15(10), e0240289. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0240289>

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). Health Problems Caused by Secondhand Smoke. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/secondhand-smoke/health.html>