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March 21, 2024

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Steven M. Sakamoto-Wengel
Consumer Protection Counsel for Regulation, Legislation and Policy

RE: House Bill 996 – Consumer Protection – Consumer Council – Name
Change and Other Modifications (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 996, sponsored by Delegate White Holland, which would change the name of the Consumer Council of Maryland to the Consumer Protection Commission.

The Consumer Council is an advisory body to the Consumer Protection Division, established by statute fifty years ago, with nine members appointed by the Governor, with 3 representing businesses, 3 representing consumers, and 3 representing the public. The Chief of the Division is an *ex officio* member. Among other things, the Council studies issues facing Maryland consumers and can issue reports and recommendations regarding those issues. The Council members also serve as liaisons between the Division and the sectors and organizations they represent and are encouraged to give talks about the Division and consumer protection to organizations and community groups.

The members of the Council determined that they can better perform those functions if the body’s name is changed to the Consumer Protection Commission. In particular, the addition of “Protection” to the name might provide greater clarity to the role of the advisory body and facilitate the body’s liaison functions.

Accordingly, the Consumer Protection Division requests that the Senate Finance Committee give HB 996 a favorable report.

cc: Members, Finance Committee
The Honorable Jennifer White Holland
Stephanie Baker, Chair, Consumer Council