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March 25, 2024

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn, Assistant Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 970 – Real Property - Residential Leases - Rent Increase Prohibition
(SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the "Division") supports House Bill 970 sponsored by Delegate Melissa Wells. House Bill 970 clarifies that a landlord who fails to provide a tenant with a proper notice of a rent increase cannot increase the tenant's rent or retaliate against the tenant.

Landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division, including complaints of rent increases and renewals. House Bill 970 provides important clarification on the consequences for a landlord that violates Section 8-209 of the Real Property Article, enacted last session by this Legislature. Section 8-209 seeks to provide tenants with adequate notice of essential and material information that would permit them to either negotiate the amount of the rent increase or to seek alternative, affordable housing. Landlords that fail to provide proper notice of a rent increase should not be permitted to increase a tenant's rent or take retaliatory actions against the tenant. House Bill 970 makes those consequences of the landlord's failure to comply with the statute explicit.

Accordingly, the Division requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee give House Bill 970 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Melissa Wells
Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee