



Testimony before the Maryland House of Delegates, Environment and Transportation  
Committee

Regarding HB 709  
Landlord and Tenant Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause  
Termination (Good Cause Eviction)  
**Position:** SUPPORT (FAV)  
February 14, 2025

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Good afternoon:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to participate at today's hearing.

My name is Sheila Somashekhar, and I am speaking on behalf of the Purple Line Corridor Coalition (PLCC), a collaborative working on equitable development along the Purple Line. With its home at the University of Maryland's National Center for Smart Growth, PLCC has developed a number of research-supported plans and policy priorities that address issues such as housing stability and affordability in gentrifying communities along the transit route.

PLCC has a stated goal in its [2023-2027 Housing Action Plan](#) to make sure residents have the choice to continue to live near the Purple Line. Along the Purple Line, 60 percent of households are renters, a share that has remained unchanged in the last two decades. Renting is more common among households in communities of color and in these places, many tenants pay a significant amount of their income (at least 30 percent if not more) on their housing costs. For many, renting is a long-term housing situation. While long-term rentership is increasingly common, renters often face precarious circumstances, many of which are outside of their direct control, and can be forced to move out their existing homes with limited recourse.

The Purple Line corridor has historically held some of the most affordable unsubsidized rental housing stock in the otherwise high-cost Washington metropolitan region. However, researchers have shown that residential rents within a half mile of the Purple Line are now [rising at a disproportionately rapid rate](#) even before rail service begins, likely due to anticipation of the future value of the land on which these homes sit. Rising property values and new rent stabilization policies create incentives for landlords to maximize profits through

tenant turnover. This puts current Purple Line tenants at risk of displacement when landlords choose not to renew a lease – even for long-standing tenants who are paying their rent and abiding by the terms of their lease. Such evictions can cause irreparable harm to families and disrupt entire communities.

[States and jurisdictions across the country are implementing just cause protections](#)

as a best practice tool to prevent unnecessary evictions through lease non-renewals, especially in gentrifying areas. With just three years remaining before the Purple Line is complete and families already facing growing rent pressures, we urge the Maryland General Assembly to support HB709.

Passing this legislation is important for the wellbeing of the communities along the Purple Line, and we encourage your support. Thank you, and please contact me at [ssomashe@umd.edu](mailto:ssomashe@umd.edu) if you wish to discuss further.