

Robin Truiett-Theodorson
Chairperson | Board of Commissioners

Janet Abrahams
President | Chief Executive Officer



March 4, 2025

TO: Members of Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Abrahams".

RE: HB 1302 - Housing and Community Development - Housing Counseling

POSITION: Letter of Information

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of Environment and Transportation Committee, please be advised that the Housing Authority of Baltimore City wishes to submit testimony on HB 1302 - Housing and Community Development - Housing Counseling.

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) was established to provide federally funded affordable housing programs and related services for Baltimore's low-income residents. Through our Public housing and Housing Choice Voucher (HCV) programs, HABC provides rental assistance to over 43,000 residents throughout Baltimore City. HABC is the 5th largest housing authority in the country, the largest housing authority in the state, and the largest provider of affordable housing in Baltimore City. HABC is federally funded and regulated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

HB 1302 - Housing and Community Development - Housing Counseling requires recipients of funding from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) for any project to construct, acquire, or rehabilitate residential property for use as housing to offer housing counseling services to prospective residents.

HABC seeks clarification regarding whether the requirement to provide housing counseling services proposed in this legislation is directed towards projects that use funds from DHCD for rental units or if this legislation is only directed towards homeownership projects. HABC does currently administer a homeownership program in which participants are required to receive housing counseling services from a HUD-certified housing counseling agency. However, we do not currently offer these services to prospective renters. If the intent of this bill is to provide housing counseling services to prospective residents of rental properties, HABC would not be able to sustain such services, as we are currently facing the prospect of diminished funding from the federal government for our existing programs which are already underfunded relative to the needs of the community. Furthermore, HABC would be challenged with a shortage of necessary staff to effectively implement these services.

Housing Authority of Baltimore City | 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21202





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In sum, for these reasons HABC requests clarification of whether the projects referred to in this bill are homeownership or rental or both, and if both, an exemption for Public Housing Authorities, instrumentalities of Public Housing Authorities and associated rental projects that receive funds from DHCD.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO

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