



Maryland DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING

HEARING DATE: February 25th
BILL NO: HB 1093
COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation
POSITION: Oppose
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT: Andrew Wilson (443) 721-6789

TITLE: HB 1093 - Landlord and Tenant - Evictions - Tenant's Personal Property and Moving Expenses and Services (Small Landlord Eviction Relief Act)

BILL ANALYSIS:

HB 1093 would reduce protections, and preclude potential future protections, for tenants of properties owned by landlords that rent out nine or fewer dwelling units by 1) making it legal across the State for small landlords to abandon the property of evicted tenants in a public right of way, and 2) prohibiting counties and municipalities from requiring landlords who rent out nine or fewer dwelling units to compensate evicted tenants for “moving expenses.” Moving expenses are defined in the bill as the packing of tenant property, transport of tenant property, and disconnection or reconnection of utilities.

POSITION AND RATIONALE:

The Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) opposes HB 1093. This bill and current law do not require landlords to advertise or disclose to prospective or current tenants how many dwelling units they rent out, so this bill would make it less clear to tenants what protections they have if an eviction proceeding were to take place. HB 1093 would also contravene existing laws of localities such as Baltimore City which forbids landlords from dumping evicted tenants’ property in the right of way. Overriding laws like Baltimore City’s would allow landlords to block sidewalks and streets with the evicted tenant’s property, which could bar access and prompt ADA concerns. Tenants may not have the capacity to collect their dumped belongings, so enabling landlords to dump them on public sidewalks and streets would impose significant cost on local governments, which would be obliged to remove the property. Eviction is a difficult and often humiliating experience for families to endure with different repercussions in different local contexts. HB 1093 would undermine localities’ efforts to respond to and address their specific conditions.

Further, MDP is pursuing an update to the State’s Growth Policy through HB 286, and one of the focuses of this update is to empower counties and municipalities to accommodate all who want to live in the state through housing affordability options. This bill would serve to undermine this focus and the ability of localities to enact laws that serve their community by making an eviction process more expensive and difficult for a tenant to navigate. Given the lack of clarity on tenants’ rights this bill would cause, HB 1093 would at best incentivize prospective renters to live outside of Maryland and at worst increase the State’s population of people experiencing homelessness. Passing this legislation at a time when over half our renters are spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing costs would only exacerbate the State’s issues with affordability.

For these reasons, MDP urges an unfavorable report on HB 1093.