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March 19, 2025

To: The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Finance Committee

From: Karen S. Straughn
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 979 – Maryland Self-Service Storage Act – Sale of Personal Property In Satisfaction of Lien – Notice Requirements (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General submits the following written testimony in support of House Bill 979 submitted by Delegates Andre V. Johnson, Jr., et al. This bill would help to ensure notice to an occupant of a self-storage facility prior to that individual's items being auctioned off. Specifically, the bill permits notice by electronic mail 10 days in advance of the auction, but if confirmation of delivery is not obtained within 5 days before the sale, a second notice must be promptly sent by verified mail to the individual's last known mailing address.

In the 2024 legislative session, a compromise was reached between the Maryland Self Storage Association and the Consumer Protection Division to permit electronic mailing of notice of an upcoming auction, as long as certain precautions were included to help ensure that the owner of the property being auctioned off had a reasonable chance of receiving the notice. However, despite this compromise, the precautionary language was erroneously not included in the bill that passed. The current legislation attempts to correct this to reflect the agreed upon language and provide an additional layer of protection to help ensure that individuals receive sufficient notice prior to the sale of their property from a self-storage unit.

For these reasons, we ask that the Finance Committee return a favorable report on this bill.

cc: The Honorable Andre V. Johnson, Jr.
The Honorable Steve Johnson
The Honorable Leslie J. Lopez
The Honorable Aletheia McCaskill
The Honorable Dana Stein
The Honorable Teresa Woorman
Members, Finance Committee