



**SB651 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases and Holdover Tenancies - Local Good Cause
Termination (Good Cause Eviction)
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,
Feb. 18, 2025
Position: FAVORABLE**

02/18/2025

The Honorable Chair Smith
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

cc: Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

Honorable Chair Smith and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) is a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations that advances economic rights and equity for Maryland families through research, education, direct service, and advocacy. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland. Economic Action is also a member of the steering committee for Renters United Maryland, a coalition of organizations dedicated to strengthening tenant protections throughout the state.

I am writing today to urge your favorable report on SB856, the Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act, which would establish critical protections for tenants living in mold-infested housing and create uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation. This bill addresses a significant public health issue that disproportionately impacts low-income renters and families across Maryland.

Our tenant advocacy program operates a hotline for renters and landlords to seek advice about their rights and responsibilities under the law, as well as receive referrals to legal services and other assistance. Through this work, we have heard countless stories from tenants living in unsafe conditions due to mold growth in their homes. Mold is not just a nuisance, it is a serious health hazard that can cause respiratory issues, allergies, asthma, and other long-term health problems, particularly for children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing conditions.¹

Despite the clear health risks, many tenants are left without recourse when landlords fail to address mold problems. Current law does not provide clear guidelines or timelines for landlords to respond to mold complaints, leaving tenants vulnerable to prolonged exposure to hazardous conditions. SB856 addresses this gap by requiring landlords to act promptly when notified of mold or dampness issues and by establishing statewide standards for mold assessment and remediation.

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mold/health-problems/index.html>

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The bill also ensures that tenants are informed of their rights and resources by requiring landlords to provide educational materials about mold prevention and remediation at the start of a lease and upon renewal. This empowers tenants to take proactive steps to protect their health and hold landlords accountable for maintaining safe living conditions.

Housing stability and safety are fundamental to the well-being of Maryland families. Mold-infested housing not only jeopardizes health but also undermines housing stability, as tenants are often forced to choose between living in unsafe conditions or facing the financial and emotional burden of moving. For low-income families, moving is often not a viable option, leaving them trapped in unhealthy environments.

SB856 is a critical step toward ensuring that all Maryland renters have access to safe, habitable housing. By establishing clear standards for mold assessment and remediation, this bill will protect tenants from the health risks associated with mold exposure and hold landlords accountable for maintaining their properties. It also provides a no-cost solution to a pervasive problem that disproportionately affects low-income communities.

For these reasons, we strongly urge a favorable report on SB856.

Sincerely,
Zoe Gallagher, Policy Associate

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