



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 25, 2025

SB856

Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)
Judicial Proceedings Committee
Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 856**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

The Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act seeks to establish clear and enforceable standards for mold prevention, assessment, and remediation in rental properties. The bill mandates collaboration among the Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of Health, the Department of Housing and Community Development, the Maryland Department of Labor, and the Department of General Services to create an informational pamphlet and website to educate tenants about mold risks and remediation procedures. Landlords will be required to provide tenants with mold-related information at key points, such as lease signing and renewal. Additionally, landlords must take timely action upon receiving notice of mold concerns, ensuring prompt assessment and remediation. The Department of the Environment, in consultation with other state agencies, must also establish uniform mold standards and integrate them into existing building codes to protect tenant health and safety.

This legislation upholds the fundamental principles of human dignity, the common good, and the preferential option for the poor. Unsafe living conditions, particularly in rental housing, disproportionately affect low-income families, the elderly, and vulnerable individuals who may lack the resources to seek alternative housing. Exposure to mold can cause severe respiratory issues, particularly in children and individuals with pre-existing health conditions, making this a matter of public health and moral responsibility.

By holding landlords accountable for mold prevention and remediation, the bill ensures that tenants are not subjected to inhumane living conditions that compromise their well-being. It aligns with the principle of stewardship, recognizing that safe and healthy housing is a shared responsibility between property owners and the broader community. Furthermore, by requiring government agencies to provide clear information and enforce uniform standards, the bill promotes subsidiarity, ensuring that local actors—tenants, landlords, and public health agencies—have the tools and knowledge to address mold-related concerns effectively.

Senate Bill 856 benefits individuals, communities, and society by protecting public health, reducing exposure to mold-related illnesses, and ensuring that tenants are informed of their rights. It holds landlords accountable by establishing clear responsibilities and remediation timelines to prevent negligence, while also promoting safe housing standards through enforceable guidelines. Additionally, it reduces economic burdens by preventing costly medical expenses and displacement due to mold-related health crises.

By prioritizing tenant safety and well-being, the Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act reflects a moral commitment to justice and human dignity, ensuring that all individuals, regardless of income, have access to safe and healthy housing. No one would like to live in conditions with mold, help all Marylanders and alleviate this burden on individuals and families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 856**.