



Senate Bill 856

*Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations
(Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Judicial Proceedings and Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committees

Date: February 25, 2025

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS SB 856 WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill establishes new requirements for landlords, including local governments with housing authorities, regarding mold prevention, assessment, and remediation, along with creating centralized resources on mold-related issues. While MACo appreciates the bill's goal to protect tenants from hazardous living conditions, certain provisions require further refinement to avoid unreasonable burdens on local governments in their capacity as enablers of affordable housing stock.

Counties support the bill's directive for State agencies to develop a centralized website with mold-related information and an informational pamphlet for distribution to tenants. These resources will provide clarity and consistency in public awareness efforts and are a wise approach to addressing mold concerns.

Additionally, the requirement for landlords to conduct mold assessments within 45 days of receiving written notice is a reasonable expectation. However, the bill also mandates remediation within the same 45-day timeframe, which may not always be practical due to the complexities of addressing mold in rental properties. Counties recommend a more flexible timeline based on the severity of mold contamination and the breadth of the properties affected to ensure thorough and effective remediation efforts.

A primary concern for counties is requiring the Department of the Environment and other departments to adopt formal regulations establishing uniform standards for mold assessment and remediation. While consistency in addressing mold issues is important, counties do not have the technical capabilities nor the resources to enforce or implement such standards. Instead, MACo urges the committee to ensure that any bill passed directs the state agencies to develop best practices and recommendations rather than regulatory mandates, ensuring guidance for landlords without placing an undue burden on local governments.

MACo appreciates the bill's focus on tenant protections and mold mitigation, but urges amendments to address the concerns outlined above. For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on SB 856. MACo's proposed amendments are included on the following page.

MACo Amendments to SB 856:

On page 4, in line 18, after "(1)" insert "**FOR A LANDLORD THAT IS NOT A PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY OR SIMILAR ENTITY,**"

On page 4, in line 24, after "(2)" insert "**A LANDLORD THAT IS A PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITY OR SIMILAR ENTITY SHALL COMPLY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION WITHIN A REASONABLE TIME PERIOD, CONSIDERING THE SCOPE OF THE MATTER IDENTIFIED, AND THE NUMBER OF PROPERTIES AFFECTED**" (3)"

On page 6, in line 24, strike "regulations establishing" and insert "**BEST PRACTICES RECOMMENDING**"; in line 26, strike "regulations" and insert "**BEST PRACTICES**"; in line 27, strike "establish" and insert "**RECOMMEND**"

On page 7, in line 21, strike "establish" and insert "**RECOMMEND**"