

SB0856_Maryland_Tenant_Mold_Protection_Act_MLC_FAV

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Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR SB0856
Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Bill Sponsor: Senator Henson

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Cecilia Plante, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in strong support of SB0856 on behalf of the Maryland Legislative Coalition. The Maryland Legislative Coalition is an association of activists - individuals and grassroots groups in every district in the state. We are unpaid citizen lobbyists and our Coalition supports well over 30,000 members.

Mold is a killer. It causes severe health damage and sometimes death. In older buildings, and buildings that are not maintained properly, mold is a constant issue.

This bill will require that a pamphlet be created or taken from the Environmental Protection Agency's website regarding mold remediation resources and how to control mold. Landlords will have to give that pamphlet to all tenants and have them sign that they have received the information. Additionally, the landlord would have to perform a mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days of notice by either a tenant or the agency enforcing housing and livability codes.

This is good practice. It helps ensure that tenants are able to get moldy conditions remediated, which is nothing short of life-saving, especially for children.

We strongly support this bill and recommend a **FAVORABLE** report in committee.

SB0856 - Maryland Legal Aid - FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Joseph Loveless

Position: FAV



Senate Bill 856

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

Hearing in the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

On February 25, 2025

Position: Favorable

Maryland Legal Aid submits its written and oral testimony on SB0856 at the request of the bill sponsor Senator Shaneka Henson.

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. Our offices serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, the most prominent of which is housing. Maryland Legal Aid asks that this Committee report **favorably** on SB 856.

Mold is a ubiquitous threat to Maryland renters.

Mold hazards are one of the most cited concerns among our clients. Our Tenant Right to Counsel Project represented tenants in over 4,600 cases in 2024, and one-fifth of those cases involved mold. Our clients' experiences demonstrate that mold in residential rental housing poses significant physical, psychological, and economic harms to children, elders, and renters who suffer from respiratory illnesses, from allergies to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). One recent client reported having to sleep with a mask on because of the mold in his apartment. Like too many of our clients, he endures living this way because, with meager fixed income, he cannot pack up and move. He can only wait and hope that his landlord remediated the mold.

The 2021 American Housing Survey estimated that 94,000 Maryland rental properties were affected by interior water leakage and 74,000 by exterior water leakage, approximately half of which originated from defective roofing. The survey estimated that 38,000 rental properties were affected by mold.¹

SB 856 establishes a needed framework for mold remediation.

SB 856 requires landlords perform a mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days of receipt of a written notice regarding the detection of mold. That notice may come from a tenant or from a local housing agency. This is an important provision, as it gives tenants agency to start the remediation process by simply contacting their landlord

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, "American Housing Survey Table Creator," American Housing Survey, 2021, https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/ahs/data/interactive/ahstablecreator.html?s_areas=00024&s_year=2021&s_tablename=TABLE5&s_bygroup1=2&s_bygroup2=19&s_filtergroup1=3&s_filtergroup2=1.

“Mold assessment” is defined as follows:

- an inspection, investigation, or a survey of a dwelling or other structure to provide information to the owner regarding the presence, identification, or evaluation of mold;
- the development of a mold management plan; or
- the collection or analysis of a mold sample.

“Mold remediation” is defined as:

- removing, cleaning, sanitizing, demolishing, or any other treatment performed to address a mold hazard, mold, or dampness; or
- abatement of the underlying cause of a mold hazard, mold, or dampness.”

Importantly, in the SB 856 process, tenants may initiate assessment and remediation through notice rather than rely entirely on local officials to get involved. Upon a written notice from a tenant, within 45 days, a landlord “shall perform” a “mold assessment” and “mold remediation.” At that stage, the landlord has discretion as to the methods of assessment and remediation.

This bill does not hold landlords to a one-size-fits-all solution to mold remediation.

SB 856 targets nine harmful types of molds.

Remediation under SB 856 applies to conditions of “dampness” – inclusive of water damage, leaks, condensation, musty or moldy odor, and excessive humidity – and nine hazardous types of molds:

1. ***Alternaria*** – Considered an allergenic mold, it can trigger asthma and hay fever symptoms. Some species may produce mycotoxins that can be harmful in high concentrations.
2. ***Aspergillus*** – Some species, such as *Aspergillus fumigatus* and *Aspergillus flavus*, produce toxic compounds (mycotoxins) that can cause respiratory infections, particularly in immunocompromised individuals.
3. ***Cladosporium*** – Generally considered an allergenic mold, it can cause respiratory issues and skin irritation under prolonged exposure.
4. ***Fusarium*** – Some species produce potent mycotoxins that are harmful to humans and animals. Exposure can lead to infections in immunocompromised individuals.
5. ***Memnoniella*** – This genus is closely related to *Stachybotrys*, and some species may produce mycotoxins that could pose health risks.
6. ***Mucor*** – Can cause opportunistic infections, particularly in immunocompromised individuals. *Mucorales* fungi are associated with mucormycosis, a severe fungal infection.
7. ***Penicillium*** – While some species are used in antibiotics and food production, others produce mycotoxins that can be harmful, particularly in damp indoor environments.

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8. ***Stachybotrys chartarum*** – Commonly called “black mold,” this type is known to produce potent mycotoxins that can cause respiratory problems, neurological issues, and other health concerns in susceptible individuals.
 9. ***Trichoderma*** – Some species produce mycotoxins, and prolonged exposure to airborne spores may cause respiratory issues.²

Federal agencies report the health consequences of mold can be severe:

Molds produce allergens (substances that can cause allergic reactions) and irritants. Inhaling or touching mold or mold spores may cause allergic reactions in sensitive individuals. Allergic responses include hay fever-type symptoms, such as sneezing, runny nose, red eyes, and skin rash. Allergic reactions to mold are common. They can be immediate or delayed. Molds can also cause asthma attacks in people with asthma who are allergic to mold.³

Cognitive issues – Extended exposure to mold has been linked to short-term memory loss, lightheadedness, dizziness, blurred vision, ringing in the ears, and loss of cognitive functions, also know as “brain fog.”

Immune effects – Long-term exposure to inhaled mycotoxins may promote inflammation and immune system changes.

Mental health issues – Studies have associated prolonged mold exposure to increased levels of depression, anxiety, and stress in both children and adults.⁴

Not one single person living in Maryland should have to risk their health because their landlord refuses to address mold hazards in their rental housing. SB 856 is a key step towards making sure no one does.

Foreseeable Gaps in Protection

While Maryland Legal Aid believes that SB 856 is a necessary step towards providing relief to our clients, SB 856 leaves noticeable areas of concern unaddressed.

- SB 856 does not specify the responsibility of local code enforcement agencies to conduct mold testing and/or air quality testing.

² “Which of the following are considered unhealthy or dangerous? Alternaria, Aspergillus, Cladosporium, Fusarium, Memnoniella, Mucor, Penicillium, Stachybotrys chartarum, Trichoderma” prompt. ChatGPT-4-turbo, OpenAI (Feb. 21, 2025).

³ U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, “Mold and Health,” <https://www.epa.gov/mold/mold-and-health>.

⁴ National Institute of Health, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, “Mold,” <https://www.niehs.nih.gov/health/topics/agents/mold>

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- SB 856 does not create a private right of action to compel compliance with its provisions.
 - SB 856 does not add “mold hazard” to the enumerated list of threats to life, health, and safety for which a tenant may seek relief in a rent escrow or warranty of habitability claim.

It is our hope that these concerns will be addressed in the future.

Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on Senate Bill 856.

If you have any questions, please contact:

Joseph Loveless, Staff Attorney

(410) 925-8572

jloveless@mdlab.org

Zafar Shah, Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing

(443) 202-4478

zshah@mdlab.org

SB586sponsor testimony final.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Hanifin Bonner

Position: FAV

SHANEKA HENSON
Legislative District 30
Anne Arundel County

Judicial Proceedings Committee

Joint Committee on Children,
Youth, and Families



James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 203
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3578
800-492-7122 Ext. 3578
Shaneka.Henson@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

SPONSOR TESTIMONY
Senate Bill 856
MARYLAND TENANT MOLD PROTECTION ACT

Chairman Smith and Committee Members

For the record, I am Senator Shaneka Henson from the 30th Legislative District of Anne Arundel County, MD. and I thank you for the opportunity to present this important Bill that has been a priority of mine for years.

We have all read or heard stories about apartments and homes subjected to levels of mold that reach a dangerous health level. And we have all heard about the challenges of being able to address these conditions particularly after they exist. So, what if we had a way to assess the various levels of mold, so that conditions were rectified early on – before getting to an extreme state requiring expensive remediation. Surely owners of apartments and houses would benefit. Because right now, we as a country, do not have any standardized method to make that determination. Even within the federal health system, such standards do not exist.

In 2024, the general assembly created a work group with representatives of state health agencies and public industry companies – all involved in mold remediation to research these underlying factors and identify ways to address them. Specifically, what are the actions needed to catch mold conditions in the early phases, and get it corrected before it reaches dangerous levels requiring remediation.

Senate Bill 856 proposes to implement the initial recommendations of the 2024 Workgroup on Mold Standards and Remediation and create best practices for:

- (i) Identifying and assessing levels of mold,
- (ii) preventing mold from developing to extreme levels within indoor environments; and
- (iii) actions targeted to remediating indoor mold conditions harmful to public health.

These recommendations are the product of scientific and research findings intended to address a long standing and neglected issue impacting tenants who are often the victims of these unhealthy living conditions.

In this bill, we are today primarily focusing on the educational and maintenance components – not the licensing and training aspect which is better left to industry experts.

Senate Bill 856 includes:

- (i) MDE establishing a statewide website with county links containing education for both tenants and landlords about mold, information about an assessment and notification process. It provides a process for educational information about preventing mold situations, taking advantage of existing and available materials from the US EPA.
- (ii) Requiring landlords to provide this information to tenants prior to moving into the unit; and to act within certain time periods after having received a notice from the tenant about the existence of mold conditions.
- (iii) Requiring State and County agencies to adopt a standardized assessment process intended to understand and assess mold conditions occurring before they get to a dangerous level and updating and reinforcing building codes as well as existing operations and maintenance practices.
- (iv) Requiring tenants to sign a statement acknowledging receiving information about mold prevention that they will follow.

If we can address this lack of a standardized assessment process, we have the tools to prevent conditions from turning into remediation issues, while protecting the health of families.

Joining me today to provide expert and supporting testimony are.

- Gabrielle Leach, Maryland Department of Health
- Aaron Greenberg representing the Maryland Multi-housing Association.
- Lisa Saro, Attorney, Community Legal Services
- Matthew Hill, Attorney, Public Justice Center

After hearing today's testimony about the ability to address this issue, I urge you to give a favorable report to this bill.

Testimony to SB 856.pdf

Uploaded by: Linda Hanifin Bonner

Position: FAV



ANNE ARUNDEL
CONNECTING TOGETHER

Testimony to SB 856

Anne Arundel Connecting Together (ACT) strongly urges members of the Judicial Committee to favorably pass SB856 – the Maryland Protection ACT of 2025

As a people's power organization and non-profit comprised of 18 faith entities, ACT represents nearly 24,000 residents living in all parts of the County's planning regions. We work across race, socioeconomic backgrounds, faith, and geography to win on issues of justice for low- and moderate-income communities in Anne Arundel County. Attaining and protecting affordable housing is one of our core priorities. ACT is committed to ensuring that an adequate housing supply exists in all regions of the county that is fair and affordable for people of all races, classes, ages, and abilities.

Enacting SB856 is an essential component to the ongoing maintenance of affordable housing stock in the county that is rented through either government agencies or private owners. From our work within the communities over the past years, we have seen evidence of the health issues evolving from mold and the impacts to the displacement of tenants. SB not only begins to establish an assessment process in which levels of mold can be determined, but the educational component to tenants and owners is both beneficial and cost effective.

Absent the existence of federal standards to address these issues, having the State of Maryland become a leader to take a positive step as a preventive measure is a no-brainer.

Sincerely,
Rev. Stephen Tillet, Chair
Pastor. Broadneck United Methodist Church

CLS Support for SB0856 - Tenant Mold Protection Ac

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV



Jessica A. Quincosa, Esq.
Executive Director

Kayla Williams-Campbell, Esq.
Deputy Director

Lisa Sarro, Esq.
Director of Litigation
and Advocacy

Jordan Colquitt
Interim Development Director

Ivy Finkenstadt, Esq.
Managing Attorney

Warren Buff, Esq.
Kathleen Hughes, Esq.
Amy B. Siegel, Esq.
Supervising Attorneys

Attorneys
Adebola Adedoyin, Esq.
Vanessa Agbar, Esq.
Golnaz Alemousavi, Esq.
Jennifer Clark, Esq.
Katherine Cooke-Caraway, Esq.
Sheree Hughes, Esq.
Lekwon Imoke, Esq.
Deborah Kadiri, Esq.
John Kowalko, Esq.
Eric Orr, Esq.
Hina Rodriguez, Esq.
Peter Spann, Esq.
Jawaid Stationwala, Esq.
Tangi Turner, Esq.
Riana Yaman, Esq.

Staff
Claudia V. Aguirre
Ashley Cartagena
Franklin Escobar
Elmer Espinoza
Stephanie Espinoza
Anna Goldfaden
Maria Teresa Herren
Flor Lemus
Allison Nardick
Stacey Palmer
Micaela Ramos
Abel Reyes
Glenda Soto
Alejandra Sorto
Samir Vasquez Romero
Karen Zayas

SB0856

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

Judicial Proceedings Committee Hearing February 25, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

To the Honorable Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee:

Community Legal Services (CLS) is a nonprofit legal services provider dedicated to ensuring equitable access to justice and due process of law for Maryland’s most under-represented populations. We strive to support, protect and advocate for the human rights of all individuals and families. We urge the Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report on this crucial legislation, which will provide tenants with clear, enforceable protections against the dangers of mold in their homes.

The Need for Objective Mold Inspection Standards

Currently, Maryland tenants suffering from mold infestations in their homes face significant barriers when seeking relief through existing legal channels. One of the most critical issues is the absence of objective standards for mold assessments. Without clear, legally recognized guidelines for what constitutes a hazardous mold condition, tenants struggle to prove their claims in rent escrow proceedings, leaving them vulnerable to continued exposure to unhealthy living conditions.

Under Maryland’s rent escrow statute, tenants can withhold rent when serious defects affect the habitability of their homes. However, in cases involving mold, tenants frequently fail to prevail in court because they lack access to standardized, objective mold assessments. Courts often dismiss mold claims due to the subjective nature of existing inspection methods, leaving tenants without effective recourse. By establishing uniform standards for mold assessments, SB 0856 will provide tenants with the evidence necessary to document their complaints, hold landlords accountable, and seek proper remedies under the law.

Health Consequences of Mold Exposure

The health risks associated with mold exposure are well-documented and severe. Mold can exacerbate respiratory conditions such as asthma and chronic bronchitis, trigger allergic reactions, and cause serious complications for individuals with compromised immune systems. Children, elderly residents, and individuals with preexisting health conditions are particularly vulnerable to mold-related illnesses. Prolonged exposure to mold has been linked to chronic sinus infections, skin irritation, and other long-term health issues.

For low-income tenants, the stakes are even higher. Unlike higher-income residents who may have the financial resources to pay for mold remediation on their own or who can relocate when their housing becomes unsafe, low-income families often have no choice but to remain in mold-infested homes. This means that they and their children are subjected to prolonged exposure to hazardous conditions that can lead to lasting health consequences. The Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act will help ensure that all tenants—regardless of their income level—have access to safe, habitable housing.

Understanding the Risks and Timely Remediation is Critical

Senate Bill 0856 requires that landlords provide educational materials provided by the State which will educate tenants about mold and available resources to obtain more information and assistance with mold issues. This will enable tenants to protect themselves within their living environment and empower them to take steps to improve conditions when necessary.

Senate Bill 0856 also requires that landlords conduct mold assessments and complete remediation within 45 days after a tenant provides notice of the detection of mold. This timeline is critical because the longer mold remains unaddressed, the more it spreads, worsening both the structural integrity of the home and the health risks to its occupants. Delayed remediation disproportionately impacts tenants who have limited options for alternative housing. They cannot afford to wait indefinitely for their landlord to act.

Conclusion

The Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act is a necessary step toward ensuring that all Maryland residents have access to safe and healthy housing. By establishing objective mold inspection standards, this bill will provide tenants with a fair opportunity to assert their rights under the rent escrow statute, promote accountability among landlords, and protect public health—particularly for the state’s most vulnerable residents. CLS strongly urges the Committee to pass SB 0856 and affirm the right of all tenants to live in mold-free homes.

Please feel free to reach out to Jessica Quincosa, Executive Director, or Lisa Sarro, Director of Litigation & Advocacy, with any questions at quincosa@clspgc.org, and sarro@clspgc.org, respectively.

SB 856 Mold Public Justice Ctr FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Hill

Position: FAV



C. Matthew Hill
Attorney
Public Justice Center
201 North Charles Street, Suite 1200
Baltimore, Maryland 21201
410-625-9409, ext. 229
hillm@publicjustice.org

SB 856 - Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations (MD Tenant Mold Protection Act)
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee,
February 25, 2025

Position: SUPPORT (FAV)

The Public Justice Center (PJC) is a nonprofit public interest law firm that stands with tenants to protect and expand their rights to safe, habitable, affordable, and non-discriminatory housing. For our clients, SB 856 is an important step forward in regulating hazardous mold that will substantially improve their living conditions. Renters throughout Maryland are dealing with mold hazards in their homes largely without the aid of state and local agencies, which lack standards on the inspection and remediation of mold. As the former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development said [in a visit to Maryland](#): “Children should never have to live in a place where they cannot breathe. When we transform houses, we transform people.”

We urgently need the General Assembly to mandate state action to address mold hazards in housing. Public Justice Center urges the Committee’s report of Favorable on SB 856 to do just that.

SB 856 provides Maryland agencies, localities, tenants, and landlords the framework for ensuring the availability of healthier housing. The bill is the product of the Workgroup on Mold Standards and Remediation issued on October 1, 2024. The bill takes a balanced approach of defining certain key terms, requiring landlords to complete timely mold assessments and remediation, and then mandating that the relevant Maryland agencies with the necessary expertise further define the necessary actions and best practices in applying this framework. This approach recognizes that mold is a serious hazard that requires ongoing attention from state agencies to adopt the latest proven techniques and science to address hazardous mold.

Public Justice Center has suggested to the bill’s sponsor two clarifying amendments that would make the bill stronger. Namely, first, in developing regulations as provided for on pages 6-7, MDE should also provide guidance on when a tenant needs to be relocated during mold remediation. Second, MDE should have the flexibility to adopt guidance that is different from the EPA regarding remediation standards given the increasing likelihood that federal government agencies like the EPA may no longer be able to fulfill core functions.

Lack of inspection and remediation standards hurts renters and weakens code enforcement

Under SB 856, Maryland agencies would develop the requisite standards to identify and address mold hazards. Presently, under local adoption of the Maryland Building Performance Standards (COMAR 09.12.51), code enforcement agencies have no definition or other criteria to use in citing evidence of mold in a property. Housing inspectors therefore describe mold inconsistently in violation reports, using phrases such as "possible mold," "appearance of mold," or a "dark substance." These euphemistic descriptions are also the product of Maryland's failure to require mold-specific training for code enforcement inspectors. Without training, these inspectors are limited to inspecting only the visible surface of the problem. As a result of having no definitional standard and no training requirements, code inspections lead to remedial steps that, while too weak to address the actual habitability of the property, are nonetheless sufficient to abate code violations.

Location of Violation: Address:2520 HARLEM AVE Block:2363 Lot:015	Violation: Issued: 10/30/2019 Number: 1855970A
<p>A Housing Code Enforcement Official inspected the property listed above and determined the property was in violation of the Building, Fire and Related Codes of Baltimore City. You are hereby ORDERED to obtain all required permits and to correct all the items cited on this notice on or before November 29, 2019. Individual items on this notice may require earlier completion as noted.</p>	
Violation	
Item # 1:	Complete within 30 Days
Location: BASEMENT STAIRS WITH RODENT HOLES	
Violation: Sec. 304.28 PMCBC - Rodent Infestation. Rectify By Securely Closing All Rodent Holes In Floors And Baseboards On Interior With 26 Gauge Non-corrosive Metal Or Replace Boards.	
Item # 2:	Complete within 30 Days
Location: BASEMENT POSSIBLE MOLD (ALONG WALL)RIGHT SIDE OF STAIRS	
Violation: Sec. 304.5, 304.6, 304.20 PMCBC Defective Wall. Repair.	
Item # 3:	Complete within 30 Days
Location: KITCHEN POSSIBLE MOLD (ON RIGHT SIDE WALL)	
Violation: Sec. 304.5, 304.6, 304.20 PMCBC Defective Wall. Repair.	
Item # 4:	Complete within 30 Days
Location: KITCHEN POSSIBLE MOLD INSIDE OF CABINETS(RIGHT SIDE)	
Violation: Sec. 304.5, 304.6, 304.20 PMCBC Defective Wall. Repair.	
Item # 5:	Complete within 30 Days
Location: DINING ROOM POSSIBLE MOLD (NEAR WINDOWS)	
Violation: Sec. 304.5, 304.6, 304.20 PMCBC Defective Wall. Repair.	

Example of local agency Code Violation Notice and Order, citing "possible" mold

The Public Justice Center is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and as such does not endorse or oppose any political party or candidate for elected office.

Unless there are visible signs of water damage or moisture, inspectors lack regulations or protocols to require a property owner to do more than cover up the mold. Literally, the accepted solution to mold hazards in Maryland rental housing is to paint over the problem.

We should not accept mold hazards simply because they are not visible. Renters expect more to be done, and their health, stability, productivity, and educational outcomes require it.

Maryland's clock is ticking when it comes to mold hazards in rental housing

The threat to tenant health and safety posed by the presence of mold in the home is clear. In the anecdotal experience Public Justice Center, the elderly and those with existing respiratory problems suffer the worst, and in some cases have been hospitalized as a suspected result of unmitigated mold growth. Many renter families also suspect domestic mold to be the cause of their children's asthma development. [A 2009 review of existing literature](#) on the health effects of dampness and mold by the **World Health Organization found a substantial body of evidence of an association with upper respiratory tract symptoms, coughing, wheezing, asthma development in otherwise healthy children, and exacerbation of already diagnosed asthma.** Maryland law should protect renter families from the potentially long-term adverse health outcomes resulting from negligent property management.

SB 856 is a first, crucial step toward a comprehensive solution to mold in rental housing.

Public Justice Center asks that the Committee **issue a FAVORABLE report on SB 856.** If you have any questions, please contact C. Matthew Hill, hillm@publicjustice.org, (410) 625-9409 Ext. 229.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVSB856_.pdf

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



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**.

Testimony in support of SB0856 - Mold - Landlord R

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB#0856_Richard Kaplowitz_FAV

02/25/2025

Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#0856 -
FAVORABLE

Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

TO: Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard Keith Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3, Frederick County. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0856, Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

This is a bill to protect public health for tenants where exposure to mold might be present.

Exposure to damp and moldy environments may cause a variety of health effects, or none.

For some people, mold can cause a stuffy nose, sore throat, coughing or wheezing, burning eyes, or skin rash. People with [asthma](#) or who are allergic to mold may have severe reactions. Immune-compromised people and people with chronic lung disease may get infections in their lungs from mold. For people who are sensitive to molds exposure to mold can lead to symptoms such as stuffy noses, wheezing, and red or itchy eyes, or skin. Severe reactions, such as fever or shortness of breath, may occur among workers exposed to large amounts of mold in occupational settings, such as farmers working around moldy hay. ¹

My Jewish faith tells me that mold was known in Biblical times and actions had to be taken against it to stop it from spreading.

Besides physical health, scriptures discuss mold in the house as a representation of sin. Like leprosy, mold in a house is unclean and destructive. According to the Old Testament Law, mold has a debilitating impact on a person's home. Like transgression, it would spread and if left unchecked it would cause chaos.

Mold has been present in homes since biblical times. In Leviticus 14:33-45, the Lord told Moses and Aaron how to rid a house of mold. The inspection, scraping, and cleaning are what humans follow to date, except we do not involve a priest! ²

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/mold-health/about/index.html#:~:text=Immune%2Dcompromised%20people%20and%20people,or%20itchy%20eyes%2C%20or%20skin.>

² <https://www.aricgitomerarchitect.com/mold-a-disease-in-your-house-an-architectural-bible-story/#:~:text=Besides%20physical%20health%2C%20scriptures%20discuss.house%20is%20unclean%20and%20destructive.>

SB#0856_Richard Kaplowitz_FAV

These measures are designed to protect tenants' health by ensuring prompt and effective mold remediation, which is particularly important for vulnerable populations like children.

To mitigate the possibility of tenants' exposure to mold this bill will require 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 develop a certain pamphlet and website containing information on what mold is and its effects on health. It should also include information on remediation when mold is found or encountered. It will mandate a landlord to provide a tenant with certain information at certain times and in a certain manner about mold. To be proactive on prevention and remediation of a mold problem this bill will require a landlord to perform a mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days after receipt of a written notice regarding the detection of mold.

It is incumbent upon landlords to prevent and fix possible harm to tenants, much as Moses and Aaron were instructed to do so in the Bible.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report on SB#0856.

GHHI Written Testimony SB856.pdf

Uploaded by: Wesley Stewart

Position: FAV



2714 Hudson Street
Baltimore, MD 21224-4716
P: 410-534-6447
F: 410-534-6475
www.ghhi.org

February 21, 2025

Senator William C. Smith, Jr., Chair
Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: **SB856 - SUPPORT** – Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Dear Chairman Smith, Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committees:

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) writes in support of Senate Bill 856. GHHI has a long-standing history of advocating for families and children on the important issue of lead poisoning prevention and addressing healthy homes hazards such as mold. GHHI provides healthy homes education, housing assessments and direct housing intervention services in Maryland to reduce triggers that cause asthma episodes and other respiratory issues in homes for children, adults and seniors. GHHI also provides tenant's rights assistance statewide and legal representation of tenants for the repair of lead hazards and other hazardous conditions in their home.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines mold as a fungus that can be found indoors and outdoors. Mold is most commonly found indoors in damp areas with poor ventilation such as bathrooms and basements. Mold exposure can cause or exacerbate many health issues such as: asthma, upper respiratory conditions and COPD¹. The presence of mold is a well-established trigger of asthma episodes and contributes to other negative health conditions. Due to the presence of mold in residential rental properties and the lack of an existing mechanism for tenants to effectively seek the repair of mold hazards, legislation is needed to ensure that rental property owners are accountable to remediate mold hazards and prevent mold exposure for tenant occupants in Maryland. Mold is a threat to life, health, and safety and occurs due to poor or inadequate ventilation, leaking roofs, water infiltration, faulty plumbing and other conditions in rental homes that cause mold growth.

¹ See CDC - Mold at <http://www.cdc.gov/mold/faqs.htm>.

The State of Maryland has some of the best health care systems in the country. However, in these same communities, we also see health disparities. Over 500,000 children and adults in Maryland have been diagnosed with asthma. Asthma is the number one reason children missed days from schools and mold is a major trigger in homes.

The societal costs directly correlate to 14.4 missed school days and 14.2 missed work days in the US annually due to asthma episodes. In Maryland, the state spends \$42.1 million annually for asthma related hospitalizations and \$93.3 million for asthma related emergency department visits. The need to address the problem and establish mold standards is at utmost importance to address asthma disparities in Maryland where African American children are hospitalized due to asthma at rates 2.5 times higher than White children.

By requiring that rental property owners distribute a mold informational pamphlet to tenants, this Bill will increase tenant and rental property awareness of mold hazards and its negative effects on human health as well as helping improve the use of proper protocols to identify and remediate mold hazards safely in rental properties. The creation of a centralized mold information website by MDH, MDE, MDDHD, MDL and Maryland DGS will serve as a critical resource for preventive mold information, tenant and rental property owner's rights and responsibilities related to mold, and instructional resources for Maryland residents.

SB856 strengthens tenant's rights and provides an "explicit" remedy in local District Court for mold hazards under the rent escrow process. Maryland law lacks existing mechanisms for tenants to adequately seek repair of mold hazards under the Real Property Article. The statutes do not provide a mechanism to tenants to effectively raise hazardous mold conditions in their property and receive a timely response that safely remediates a mold hazard. The statutes also do not explicitly list "mold" as a threat or hazard to life, health and safety.

GHHI represents tenants in District Courts in Maryland and has witnessed cases where judges are reluctant or unsure whether they have the authority to order mold remediation. Legislation is warranted to specifically expand the state law to include mold as a hazard and to delineate specific housing assessment and mold hazard remediation requirements for rental property owners. SB856 will provide clarity for District Court judges in rent court and to tenants and rental property owners by establishing those requirements as well as defined response period to the receipt of notice of the hazard.

A number of states and the District of Columbia have already passed laws and regulations to address mold hazards in rental properties. Some examples of states and jurisdictions passing legislation to specifically address mold hazards in rental properties and provide for tenant's rights to have mold remediated include:

- **Washington, DC** requires Landlords must respond to a tenant's complaint about mold within 7 days and remediate the area within 30 days.²

² <https://code.dccouncil.us/dc/council/code/titles/8/chapters/2B/#>

- **State of Virginia** law states that Landlords must maintain residential rental properties to prevent moisture accumulation, and that if there is visible mold, it must be remediated according to state standards.³
- **City of New York** requires Landlords to address indoor allergen hazards including mold.⁴ and establishes time frames in which they must be addressed

Maryland residents need to be protected from being exposed to mold hazards and know that there are protections in place to properly address indoor mold hazards in rental properties where they exist. SB856 will better protect the health of Maryland citizens by increasing awareness, by addressing mold hazards that are a significant home-based environmental health hazards and by providing tenants with a direct remedy when they are faced with mold hazards in their rental home. We request a Favorable Report on SB856.

Respectfully Submitted,



Ruth Ann Norton
President and CEO

³ <https://law.lis.virginia.gov/vacode/title55.1/chapter12/section55.1-1220/>

⁴ Int. No. 385-C. Introduced in 2018 by The New York City Council.

<https://legistar.council.nyc.gov/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=1812831&GUID=4D6B3532-B1A2-4A7E-8134-549BFD1ED2A2&Options=ID|Text|&Search=Int.+No.+385-C>

SB856 - Mold Prevention Act FAV 2025.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Zoe Gallagher

Position: FAV



**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>

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494

info@econaction.org · www.econaction.org

Tax ID 52-2266235

Economic Action Maryland Fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and your contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.



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

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD · 21218 · 410-220-0494
info@econaction.org · www.econaction.org
Tax ID 52-2266235

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MMHA - 2025 - SB 856 - Maryland Tenant Mold Protec

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FWA



Bill Title: Senate Bill 856, Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 25, 2025

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) respectfully submits this testimony on Senate Bill 856. MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, representing owners and managers of over 210,000 rental housing units in 958 apartment communities across Maryland. Our members house more than 538,000 residents, and MMHA also includes over 250 associate members who provide goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

Senate Bill 856 proposes several measures related to mold prevention and remediation. It requires multiple state agencies—including 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 develop a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness. Additionally, the bill mandates the creation and periodic update of an informational pamphlet on mold, which must include state resources and tenant guidance on mold prevention. Instead of developing a new pamphlet, agencies may opt to use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home.”

Housing providers would be required to provide this pamphlet at lease signing and every two years thereafter, with residents signing an acknowledgment of receipt. Furthermore, Senate Bill 856 mandates that housing providers conduct a mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days of receiving written notice of suspected mold from a local enforcement agency or a tenant.

MMHA supports the intent of the bill, particularly its focus on resident education regarding mold prevention. The Mold Workgroup Report (2024) recognized the importance of resident awareness, recommending the development of a centralized website and distribution of an educational pamphlet to tenants, in alignment with the bill’s objectives. However, MMHA has concerns about specific provisions that could impose unnecessary administrative burdens or compliance challenges.

Suggested Amendments:

1. Requiring Pamphlet Distribution Every Two Years

MMHA agrees that providing residents with the mold information pamphlet at lease signing is reasonable. However, requiring landlords to redistribute the pamphlet every two years—along with obtaining a signed acknowledgment—creates unnecessary



administrative burdens. The Mold Workgroup Report supports providing educational materials to tenants but does not suggest repeated distribution requirements beyond the initial lease signing. We recommend removing the biennial requirement by striking page 4, line 15 from the bill.

2. Automatic Mold Remediation Without Confirmation of Mold Growth

While the requirement for a mold assessment within 45 days of receiving a complaint is reasonable, the bill automatically triggers remediation, even if the assessment finds no evidence of mold. The Mold Workgroup Report emphasizes that mold abatement efforts should focus on both mold and the underlying moisture issue, but it does not advocate for mandatory remediation without confirmation. We recommend amending the bill to remove the automatic remediation requirement by striking page 4, lines 24-25 ("AND MOLD REMEDIATION").

MMHA appreciates the bill's effort to improve resident education and establish best practices for mold prevention. However, we urge amendments to ensure the legislation is practical and aligned with the recommendations of the Mold Workgroup Report.

MMHA respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments to Senate Bill 856.

Aaron J. Greenfield, MMHA Director of Government Affairs, 410.446.1992

SB896_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Hugo Cantu

Position: FWA



Bill: Senate Bill 856, Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations
(Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Committee: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: February 18, 2025

Position: Favorable with Amendments

The Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA) of Metropolitan Washington is a non-profit trade association representing the owners and managers of more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 133,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. AOBA submits the following testimony on Senate Bill 856.

Senate Bill 856 requires several state agencies to develop a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness. The also bill mandates the creation and periodic update of an informational pamphlet on mold, which must include state resources and tenant guidance on mold prevention. Instead of developing a new pamphlet, agencies may opt to use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home.”

The bill would require housing providers to provide the pamphlet at lease signing and every two thereafter, with residents signing an acknowledgment of receipt. Furthermore, Senate Bill 856 mandates that housing providers conduct mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days of receiving written notice of suspected mold from a local enforcement agency or a tenant.

AOBA supports the intent of the bill, particularly its focus on resident education regarding mold prevention. The Mold Workgroup Report (2024) recognized the importance of resident awareness, recommending the development of a centralized website and distribution of an educational pamphlet to tenants, in alignment with the bill’s objectives. However, AOBA has concerns about specific provisions that could impose unnecessary administrative burdens or compliance challenges.

Suggested Amendments:

1. Requiring Pamphlet Distribution Every Two Years

AOBA agrees that providing residents with the mold information pamphlet at lease signing is reasonable. However, requiring landlords to redistribute the pamphlet every two years—along



with obtaining a signed acknowledgment—creates unnecessary administrative burdens. The Mold Workgroup Report supports providing educational materials to tenants but does not suggest repeated distribution requirements beyond the initial lease signing. We recommend removing the biennial requirement by striking page 4, line 15 from the bill.

2. Reasonable Steps to Remediate

There are times where mold is caused not by the housing providers but instead by the behaviors of the tenants, subsequently falling out of the control of the landlord. As for issues that the landlord is responsible for, as written, the bill sets a deadline of 45-days to remediate issues. This means the underlying issue must be solved within this timeline, such as fixing an HVAC unit. For example, if there is a need to source parts to solve an HVAC issue, if there is a delay in the national or global supply chain the provider would miss the 45-day timeline and effectively be out of compliance. AOBA recommends amending page 4, lines 18-19 to include language that would provide an extension to the landlord should events outside of their control take place.

3. Automatic Mold Remediation Without Confirmation of Mold Growth

While the requirement for a mold assessment within 45 days of receiving a complaint is reasonable, the bill automatically triggers remediation, even if the assessment finds no evidence of mold. The Mold Workgroup Report emphasizes that mold abatement efforts should focus on both mold and the underlying moisture issue, but it does not advocate for mandatory remediation without confirmation. We recommend amending the bill to remove the automatic remediation requirement by striking page 4, lines 24-25 ("AND MOLD REMEDIATION").

For these reasons, AOBA urges a favorable report with amendments on Senate Bill 856. For more information, please contact Brian Anleu at banleu@aoba-metro.org.

SB0856-JPR_MACo_SWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Karrington Anderson

Position: FWA



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**"

SB856 Support with Amendments.pdf

Uploaded by: Lisa Laschalt

Position: FWA



Affiliate of The Maryland Association of Counties, Inc.

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings and Education, Energy, and the Environment

FROM: Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors

RE: SB856 – Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (Conference) provides this **letter of Support with Amendments** for SB856 in their capacities as the state's twenty-four Environmental Health Directors who carry out delegated authorities from both MDE and MDH. The Conference does support posting information for landlords and tenants on mold and water infiltration. This information should include prevention and abatement of mold from federally recognized sources. Amendments that address the following are suggested:

1. Address the challenges in that no federal standards for acceptable levels of mold exist. Mold is ubiquitous in the environment and, to conduct enforcement under this proposal, acceptable levels will need to be set.
2. Individuals' experience varying impacts from mold exposure from the type of mold to the levels of mold present. It is difficult to set standards that would cover all impacts. Consider focusing on toxigenic/mycotoxin producing species.
3. The Maryland State lab does not have the ability to analyze mold and local inspection authorities, in general, do not have the equipment or experience to test for mold or interpret the results.
4. There is no recommended clearance testing after remediation in this proposal.
5. Minimum livability regulations already require abatement of water infiltration. It would be helpful to prevent mold by strengthening the prevention standards for water infiltration sources. It is also recommended that measurable standards, like relative indoor humidity, be considered.
6. There are over 100,000 species of mold. Only nine genera are identified in the proposed legislation. Clarification regarding when "mold" remediation is needed can be misconstrued to mean that only identification of one of those nine genera need to be removed.

Therefore, the Conference provides a **letter of Support with Amendments** for SB856.

For more information:

Conference: Lisa A Laschalt, President, Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors,
Phone: 301-609-6758, lisa.laschalt@maryland.gov

MBIA Letter of Support with Amendment SB 856.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FWA

February 25, 2025

The Honorable Will Smith
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee
2 Miller West Building
Annapolis, MD, 21401

RE: SB856 - Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Dear Chair Smith:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB856 - Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act) MBIA Supports the Act with Amendments.**

Senate Bill 856 proposes several measures related to mold prevention and remediation. It requires multiple state agencies—including 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 develop a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness. Additionally, the bill mandates the creation and periodic update of an informational pamphlet on mold, which must include state resources and tenant guidance on mold prevention. Instead of developing a new pamphlet, agencies may opt to use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s “Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture and Your Home.”

Housing providers would be required to provide this pamphlet at lease signing and every two years thereafter, with residents signing an acknowledgment of receipt. Furthermore, Senate Bill 856 mandates that housing providers conduct a mold assessment and mold remediation within 45 days of receiving written notice of suspected mold from a local enforcement agency or a tenant. The Tenant Safety Act which went into effect in October of 2024 places a responsibility on landlords to provide a safe and habitable dwelling unit for tenants. MBIA supports the intent of the bill, and the Mold Workgroup Report (2024) recognized the importance of resident awareness, recommending the development of a centralized website and distribution of an educational pamphlet to tenants, in alignment with the bill’s objectives.

However, the industry does have some concerns related to certain provisions and would suggest the following amendments:

- Requiring Pamphlet Distribution Every **Two Years**
- Automatic Mold Remediation Without Confirmation of Mold Growth

Thank you for your consideration and we urge the suggested amendments - for more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee

SB 856_realtors_unf.pdf

Uploaded by: William Castelli

Position: UNF



Senate Bill 856 – Mold – Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Position: Unfavorable

Maryland REALTORS® oppose SB 856 which requires Maryland agencies to develop a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness as well as an informational pamphlet. The bill also requires a landlord to give tenants the state pamphlet on mold and sets time frames to inspect and remediate mold after being notified by the local housing inspector or tenant.

The REALTORS® have no problem providing a state created pamphlet to tenants regarding mold but don't believe that the landlord should have to continue to handout this pamphlet out every two years.

The REALTORS® also believe that giving a landlord 45 days to complete an assessment and remediation of property may not be enough time – particularly in a single-family rental property. It is not uncommon for tenants in these properties to turn off a dehumidifier in a basement because of energy costs or noise. However, for most basements, the dehumidifier protects both the tenant and property from mold growth. If a situation goes unchecked in a property like this and wallboard must be removed and basements treated (which has happened), it can take longer than 45 days to remedy the mold.

Finally, the last example demonstrates that prevention of mold in every unit is not just a landlord's responsibility. Tenants also bear responsibility to ensure protection from mold growth.

As drafted, the REALTORS® oppose SB 856.

**For more information contact lisa.may@mdrealtor.org or
christa.mcgee@mdrealtor.org**

MDE SB856 INF.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D. Baker

Position: INFO



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

Senate Bill 856

Mold - Landlord Requirements and Regulations (Maryland Tenant Mold Protection Act)

Position: Information
Committee: Judicial Proceedings
Date: February 25, 2025
From: Jeremy D. Baker, Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) is providing **INFORMATIONAL** testimony for SB 856.

Bill Summary

Senate Bill 856 would require MDE, in coordination with the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD), the Maryland Department of Labor (MDL), and the Maryland Department of General Services (DGS) to develop and update, as necessary, a centralized website providing information about mold remediation and dampness and an informational pamphlet on mold that includes resources in the State relating to mold and how tenants can control mold growth in their unit. MDE can use the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "Brief Guide to Mold, Moisture, and Your Home" pamphlet in lieu of developing a separate pamphlet.

Additionally, on or before June 1, 2027, MDE, in consultation with MDH, DHCD, MDL, and DGS, would be required to establish in regulation uniform standards for mold assessment and mold remediation.

Position Rationale

MDE, in collaboration with our sister agencies, would be able to create a centralized state website and an informational pamphlet on mold with current resources. However, developing regulations would have a fiscal impact as no administration within the Department currently has the expertise on mold assessments or remediation. As such, MDE anticipates that we would need to hire a third party consultant with the relevant expertise to inform the creation of the new regulations, as well as support public outreach. Currently, there are no federal regulations or standards for airborne mold contaminants.

Additionally, it is unclear if MDE would have any enforcement responsibility or would be responsible for ensuring compliance with the promulgated regulations. If MDE is required to enforce those regulations, the Department would need resources to create a new program within the agency to ensure landlords are properly performing mold assessments and remediations.

Accordingly, MDE respectfully requests the Committee consider this information during its deliberation.

Contact: Jeremy Baker, Director of Government Relations
Cell: 240-548-3321 Email: jeremy.baker@maryland.gov