

HB 339 PJC SB Crossover FAV.pdf

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Position: FAV



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HB 339 - Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirements

Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee on March 26, 2025

Position: FAVORABLE

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 and their rights to fair and equal treatment by Maryland's landlord-tenant laws, courts, and agencies. We represent or advise over 800 renter households each year, and we advocate to change laws regarding evictions and to demand the development of equitable and sustainable affordable housing.

HB 339 is a necessary step to ensuring Maryland renters have a safe home. Currently in Maryland, air conditioning is not considered essential to life, health, and safety under Maryland's escrow law and is not a required feature that landlords must offer tenants. This is dangerous and puts thousands of renters, particularly older adults, tenants with disabilities and children, unnecessarily at risk.¹

In Baltimore City, where most of Public Justice Center's clients reside, there is minimal tree cover and green spaces. In that environment higher temperatures create a deadly situation for those who do not have air conditioning. Because there is no requirement to provide air conditioning generally, approximately 55% of Baltimore households have no guarantee that their homes will protect them from hazardous summer heat. We have left many tenants throughout the state open and exposed to heat-related illnesses and complications. While **HB 339** will not address the need for air conditioning in properties that are not new or undergoing substantial rehabilitation, it will ensure going forward that any apartments built or rehabbed in Maryland will have air conditioning.

There is precedent for **HB 339** Montgomery County already requires air conditioning in rental housing units if the building is not a single-family dwelling or on the National Register of Historic Places.² **HB 339** is more modest in that it only applies to new or rehabbed buildings. Particularly in light of climate change and global warming, the need to ensure that Maryland's renting families have some protection from heat stroke and other health risks due to heat has never been greater.

¹ See, e.g., <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/the-dangers-of-extreme-heat/> ; https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/pubs/extreme-heat-final_508.pdf; <https://www.weather.gov/ffc/heat2>

² <https://www3.montgomerycountymd.gov/311/Solutions.aspx?SolutionId=1-6VX9W2>

Public Justice Center asks that the Committee **issue a FAVORABLE report on HB 339**. If you have any questions, please contact Albert Turner, Esq., turnera@publicjustice.org (410) 625-9409 Ext. 250.

HB0339 Real Property - Residential Rental Apartmen

Uploaded by: Cecilia Plante

Position: FAV



TESTIMONY FOR HB0339 Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments – Air-Conditioning Requirements

Bill Sponsor: Delegate Lehman

Committee: Judicial Proceedings

Organization Submitting: Maryland Legislative Coalition

Person Submitting: Aileen Alex, co-chair

Position: FAVORABLE

I am submitting this testimony in favor of HB0339 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.

Compared to earlier iterations of this legislation, HB0339 can be a game-changer, significantly expanding access to adequate cooling for more Maryland residents. This bill mandates air conditioning in newly constructed residential rental units starting June 1, 2025, and in existing units that undergo alterations starting October 1, 2025. It requires landlords to provide air conditioning in line with specific temperature standards set by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating, and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) Standard 552.

Maryland is already grappling with the effects of climate change, with temperatures soaring higher than ever. The average annual temperature in the state has risen nearly 4 degrees Fahrenheit above the average between 1895-1915. Both day and nighttime temperatures are on the rise. From 1970 to 2016, the number of days over 95 degrees Fahrenheit increased by 3.7 days. The number of nights with temperatures above 75 degrees Fahrenheit went from 2 per year in 1950 to 7 per year in 2019. The days with a heat index above 105 degrees Fahrenheit have also surged, and more heatwaves are anticipated.

With global warming cranking up the planet's thermostat, air conditioning has shifted from a luxury to an absolute necessity for our members. As temperatures climb and heatwaves become more frequent and intense, staying cool isn't just about comfort—it's about survival. Extreme heat stresses our bodies, leading to dehydration, heat exhaustion, and even life-threatening heatstroke. For many people, especially the elderly, young children, and those with health conditions, a cool environment can literally be a lifesaver.

But it's not just individual health at stake. Air conditioning keeps our daily lives on track. Imagine trying to work, study, or even sleep when it's sweltering—you can't focus, productivity plummets, and everything feels ten times harder. By maintaining comfortable indoor temperatures, we can stay productive and keep our sanity when the world outside feels like an oven.

There's also the air quality angle. Global warming doesn't just heat things up; it can worsen air pollution and increase allergens. Modern AC systems help filter out pollutants and allergens, giving us cleaner air to breathe indoors. That's a big deal, especially in urban areas where smog can be a real problem.

When it comes to the carbon footprint, modern air conditioning units prioritize energy efficiency and sustainability. Innovations like variable-speed compressors and inverter technology allow the units to adjust their cooling output precisely to renters' needs, rather than operating at a constant, inefficient full speed. Smart thermostats and Wi-Fi-enabled controls enable renters to control their systems remotely via smartphones or voice assistants, set schedules, and receive maintenance alerts.

The Maryland Legislative Coalition steadfastly supports this bill and similar initiatives that help mitigate the impact of global climate change.

HB 339_Crossover_Consumer Protection Division_Favo

Uploaded by: Kira Wilpone-Welborn

Position: FAV

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Chief Operating Officer

KIRA WILPONE-WELBORN
Assistant Attorney General

March 24, 2025

To: The Honorable William C. Smith, Jr.
Chair, Judicial Proceedings Committee

From: Kira Wilpone-Welborn, Assistant Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division

Re: House Bill 339 – Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning
Requirements (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 339 sponsored by Delegates Lehman, *et al.* House Bill 339 would require newly constructed residential rental units to provide air conditioning from June to October. And would expand requirements to provide air conditioning from June to October to existing residential rental units only after those units undergo voluntary renovations.

Landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division, including complaints about when and if landlords are required to provide air conditioning to renters. Presently, Maryland landlords are not required to provide access to air conditioning in rental units as they are required to provide heat in cold weather months. As excessive and prolonged heat waves proliferate, access to air conditioning provides important protections to our most vulnerable populations, including the elderly and young children.¹ House Bill 339 provides reasonable steps to expand access to air conditioning in rental units as our climate warms, and would assist the Division in mediating consumer complaints.

¹ See R. Sari Kovats and Shakoor Hajat, “Heat Stress and Public Health: A Critical Review,” Annual Review of Public Health 2008 29:1, 41-55 at 48 (“U.S. studies indicate that air conditioning is an important protective factor for heat-related mortality...Lack of air conditioning may explain the risk of heat stroke in poor urban elderly persons in some U.S. inner cities...”, available here: <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev.publhealth.29.020907.090843>

Accordingly, the Division requests that the Judicial Proceedings Committee give House Bill 339 a favorable report.

cc: The Honorable Mary A. Lehman, *et. al.*
Members, Judicial Proceedings Committee

CLS Support for HB0339 in JPR - Air Conditioning R

Uploaded by: Lisa Sarro

Position: FAV

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HB0339 – Real Property – Residential Rental Apartments – Air-Conditioning Requirements

**Hearing Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 26, 2025**

Position: FAVORABLE

To the Honorable Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Community Legal Services (CLS) appreciates the opportunity to submit this testimony in support of HB0339. CLS provides free legal services to support and advocate for the rights and well-being of Maryland's most under-served communities. Much of what we do involves supporting housing stability and ensuring healthy housing conditions for individuals and families, many of whom reside in rental apartments. For residents of Maryland, requiring apartment complexes to have air conditioning is not just a matter promoting comfort and convenience. Rather, it is a matter of protecting the health and safety of Maryland renters.

Heat Exposure Presents Significant Public Health Risks

Maryland's summers are growing hotter, with prolonged periods of extreme heat becoming more and more frequent. The health risks associated with excessive indoor heat are well-documented and severe. Heat exposure can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion, and life-threatening heat stroke. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognizes extreme heat as one of the deadliest weather-related hazards in the United States, with older adults, infants, and individuals with preexisting health conditions at greatest risk.

We often represent clients who are elderly, families with young children, and individuals with illnesses or mobility limitations for whom leaving home is complicated and infrequent. Summers are particularly hard for these clients. For elderly tenants, high indoor temperatures can exacerbate chronic health issues such as heart disease, respiratory conditions, and hypertension. Babies and young children, whose bodies cannot regulate temperature as efficiently as adults, are also highly susceptible to heat-related illnesses. Without air conditioning, these vulnerable populations face unnecessary and preventable health crises every summer.

The Disproportionate Impact on Low-Income Renters

Representing low to moderate income clients, we have seen firsthand how unbearable heat conditions force tenants to choose between their housing and their health during Maryland summers, especially those who live in older buildings that were not designed to withstand Maryland's increasingly hot summers. Individuals and families with limited financial resources are often left to endure dangerous indoor temperatures because they lack the funding needed to install or maintain air conditioning units on their own. Furthermore, low-income households are particularly hard hit by the cost of medical care and potential lost earnings when heat-related illnesses arise. They are also less able to relocate or seek alternative cooling options, such as staying in air-conditioned public spaces, which may not be accessible due to transportation barriers or limited hours.

We Respectfully Urge this Committee to Issue a Favorable Report on HB0339

While this bill does not represent an immediate fix for all tenants in apartment housing, requiring air conditioning to be included in newly constructed buildings and requiring the installation of air conditioning in older apartment buildings when HVAC systems are repaired or replaced, Maryland will take a big step forward in addressing these health risks to Maryland residents. Without the solution provided with HB0339, however, exposure to extreme indoor heat will continue to place the health and safety of low-income renters at risk.

Maryland has long required landlords to provide heat during cold months because lawmakers recognize that extreme cold is a public health risk. The same logic must apply to extreme heat. HB 0339 would respond to this anomaly by ensuring that all residential rental apartments provide air conditioning that can maintain safe indoor temperatures during the summer months. This bill is a necessary and reasonable measure to protect tenants' health, safety, and quality of life. No Marylander should suffer heat-related illness or death simply because they cannot afford an air-conditioned home. House Bill 0339 is a crucial step toward ensuring safe and habitable housing for all renters. For these reasons, **Community Legal Services urges this committee to submit a favorable report on HB0392.**

Please feel free to reach out to Lisa Sarro, Community Legal Services Director of Litigation and Advocacy, with any questions at sarro@clspgc.org.

HB339 SENATE WRITTEN TESTIMONY LEHMAN.pdf

Uploaded by: Mary Lehman

Position: FAV

DELEGATE MARY A. LEHMAN
Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee



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Mary.Lehman@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB339 **Real Property – Residential Rental Apartments – Air Conditioning Requirements** **March 26, 2025** **SUPPORT**

Good Afternoon Chair Smith, Vice Chair Waldstreicher, and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

For the record, my name is Delegate Mary Lehman and I am here in support of HB339 Real Property – Residential Rental Apartments – Air Conditioning Requirements.

HB339 states that rental units in newly constructed apartment buildings with four or more units must include air conditioning that is capable of cooling each unit to no greater than 80° Fahrenheit. For Maryland's existing building stock, HB339 states that air conditioning must be included only once a rental unit undergoes a renovation that includes the replacement or substantial upgrade of electrical systems or heating systems. This includes replacing a gas boiler, a water heater, or other substantial electrical work.

HB339 notably does NOT specify what type of air conditioning must be installed - I decided to leave that up to the property owners. Any combination of heat pumps, central air, window units or other cooling apparatuses is acceptable under HB339, so long as the unit can be cooled to the 80° threshold. The air conditioning requirement only applies between June 1 and September 30. If this bill sounds familiar to you, it is because it mirrors existing law in both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The version of the bill before you today is the result of hard work and compromise with groups including the Maryland Multi-Housing Association and Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington, who opposed the legislation last year but are neutral on this year's version.

I am asking that you consider this bill not in the context of housing and renters rights, but in the context of public health, disaster mitigation, and community resilience. In 2016, The Maryland Department of Health, along with the University of Maryland School of Public Health, published the Maryland Climate and Health Profile Report. Evidence from the report, which was based on a decade of Maryland hospitalization data, indicated that exposure to extreme heat events are increasing the risk of hospitalization due to heart attacks and asthma. The report also

found that even with current climate change mitigation efforts, extreme heat events will continue to become more common for the foreseeable future.

During the process of constructing this bill, I spoke with Dr. Amir Sapkota, a contributor to the Report. He said that based on the current trajectory of climate change, communities need to adapt. He said that HB339 bill would increase community resilience and, I quote, “prevent many deaths.”

As an example of what can happen when a heat wave strikes a region that is ill-prepared for such conditions, I’d point you to the Pacific Northwest heat wave from the summer of 2021. It killed 200 people in total, 69 of whom were from Multnomah County, Oregon, which includes Portland. A study undertaken by the county dug into the data. It found that, at most, three of the individuals who died had air conditioning units that were on and in working order. In one case a portable air conditioning unit was found in use, but it was not able to keep up with the heat. The Report found that lack of air conditioning was a key driver in mortality.

Last year, this committee, along with my committee, ENT moved the Tenant Safety Act of 2024. It was landmark legislation aimed at providing much needed support to tenants living in unsafe housing conditions. However, because Maryland law has no mention of cooling requirements, or even an indoor temperature maximum for what can be considered habitable, legal action for these unsafe situations face an uphill battle unless cooling is explicitly mentioned in a tenant’s lease. This bill is a first step toward changing that.

I am confident that it will save lives, which is why I am here today urging you for a favorable report. Thank you.

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HB0339_TimHoang_Fav-2.pdf

Uploaded by: Tim Hoang

Position: FAV

TESTIMONY
Maryland General Assembly
Environmental and Transportation Committee
In Favor of HB0339—Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning
Requirements
Tim Hoang 415-964-1105

March 26, 2024

Good afternoon, Chairman Smith and Vice Chair Waldstreicher and Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee,

My name is Tim Hoang, and I am representing the Montgomery County Renters Alliance in support of HB0339. The Renters Alliance thanks Delegate Lehman and the co-sponsors for introducing this important legislation that will protect tenants from ever rising heat and climate Change.

HB0339 requires landlords to provide tenants with air conditioning. As record high temperatures become increasingly more common, we need to protect our tenants, many of whom are elderly, disabled, or children. Without air conditioning, we are seeing increased risk of heat stroke, decreased worker productivity, and lagging academic performance. It is brutal trying to cook or sleep when the temperature is over 80 degrees inside.

Montgomery County passed similar legislation in 2019 with the desired effect of protecting renters. Heating is already mandated in the winter months and now it is time for air conditioning to be considered a standard as well. We cannot ignore the effects of climate change causing more extreme temperatures. The Renters Alliance urges a favorable report on this important legislation.

Thank you,
Tim Hoang
5461 Marlin st.
Rockville, MD

HB0339 - Senate JPR - Maryland Legal Aid - FAV (b)

Uploaded by: Zafar Shah

Position: FAV



HB0339 – Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirements
Hearing before the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
March 26, 2025

Position: Favorable

Maryland Legal Aid (MLA) submits its written testimony on HB0339 at the request of the bill sponsor Delegate Mary Lehman.

MLA is a non-profit law firm that provides free legal services to the State's low-income and vulnerable residents. Our 12 offices serve residents in each of Maryland's 24 jurisdictions and handle a range of civil legal matters, including for Marylanders struggling with housing insecurity. MLA advocates for the right of low-income renters to live in safe housing. We urge the Committee's favorable report on HB0339.

HB0339 provides a targeted policy to tackle an increasingly dangerous aspect of rental: heat hazards in apartment buildings that lack air conditioning.

- HB0339 requires air conditioning only in apartment buildings of four or more units that are newly constructed or have been renovated. Renovation is defined in the bill as requiring "replacement or substantial upgrade" of electrical or heating "systems."
- The requirements of HB0339 do not apply to single-family rental properties.
- For properties covered by this bill, HB0339 requires provision of air-condition capable of maintaining a temperature of 80°F or lower in each habitable space of the dwelling unit (e.g., not kitchens, bathrooms).
- The provision of air conditioning would be required only seasonally, during the period of June 1 to September 30.

Heat hazards are highest in market-rate multi-family housing.

A 2022 study demonstrated that "[m]arket-rate multifamily rental housing had, on average, the greatest overall heat risk, followed by subsidized multifamily rental housing, owner-occupied multifamily housing, and single-family housing."¹ That study further showed that

¹ National Low Income Housing Coalition, "Study Finds Households in Multifamily Rental Housing Face Greatest Heat Risk," Aug 08, 2022, <https://nlihc.org/resource/study-finds-households-multifamily-rental-housing-face-greatest-heat-risk>; C. J. Gabbe et al., "Housing and Urban Heat:

- Access to central air conditioning “appeared to be the largest driver of disparities in heat risk among the housing types.”
- The average likelihood of not having central AC was 44.9% for single-family housing, 50.5% for subsidized multifamily rental housing, 52.4% for owner-occupied multifamily housing, and 73.7% for market-rate multifamily rental housing.
- Average land surface temperatures were 110.1 degrees for owner-occupied multifamily parcels, 111.4 for subsidized multifamily rental housing, 111.6 for single-family parcels, and 112.1 for market-rate multifamily rental parcels.²

Air conditioning is necessary to mitigate extreme heat zones.

Without the aid of air conditioning, urban rental housing stock is inadequate and unsafe as unmitigated extreme heat endangers older adults, young children, and people with health conditions ranging from asthma to cardiovascular disease.³ Extreme heat predominantly impacts urban residents. For instance, in Baltimore City, the “[a]verage annual temperatures... have gone up more than 3 degrees over the last century, nearly twice as much as the rest of the country.”⁴ Approximately 30% of Baltimore City’s occupied rental housing was built before 1940.⁵

Baltimore City exemplifies how urban heat zones disparately impact low-income residents and residents of color.⁶ According to a recent analysis of U.S. census data and air temperature data, Baltimore’s hottest areas tend to be the poorest and can differ by as much as 10 degrees from the coolest.⁷ Urban heat zones are also concentrated in formerly redlined sections of U.S. cities, including Baltimore.⁸

Assessing Risk Disparities,” Housing Policy Debate (2022), <https://doi.org/10.1080/10511482.2022.2093938>.

² *Id.*

³ Harvard Chan School of Public Health, “Health-harming extreme heat, driven by climate change, on the rise,” June 24, 2022, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/health-harming-extreme-heat-driven-by-climate-change-on-the-rise>; see also *id.*, “The dangers of extreme heat,” July 26, 2022, <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/hsph-in-the-news/the-dangers-of-extreme-heat/>.

⁴ Ian Round et al., “In urban heat islands, climate crisis hits harder,” Howard Center for Investigative Journalism, Sept. 3, 2019, <https://cnsmaryland.org/interactives/summer-2019/code-red/neighborhood-heat-inequality.html>.

⁵ U.S. Census Bureau, S2504 Physical Housing Characteristics for Occupied Housing Units, 2021 American Community Survey, <https://data.census.gov/table?q=Baltimore+City,+housing&tid=ACSST1Y2021.S2504>.

⁶ Meg Anderson, “As Rising Heat Bakes U.S. Cities, The Poor Often Feel It Most,” National Public Radio, Sept. 3, 2019, <https://www.npr.org/2019/09/03/754044732/as-rising-heat-bakes-u-s-cities-the-poor-often-feel-it-most>.

⁷ *Supra* note 2.

⁸ Meg Anderson, “Racist Housing Practices From The 1930s Linked To Hotter Neighborhoods Today,” National Public Radio, Jan. 14, 2020, <https://www.npr.org/2020/01/14/795961381/racist-housing-practices-from-the-1930s-linked-to-hotter-neighborhoods-today> (“In a study of 108 urban areas nationwide, the formerly redlined neighborhoods of nearly every city studied were hotter than the non-redlined neighborhoods, some by nearly 13 degrees.”).

Comparison to local laws:

Montgomery County and Prince George's County each have adopted local requirements on air conditioning for rental properties.⁹ Those local laws are like HB0339 in requiring certain properties to provide air condition between June 1 and September 30 and use the 80°F-threshold temperature. The Prince George's County law applies to all dwellings whereas HB0339 applies only to apartment buildings that are newly reconstructed or renovated.

HB0339 would help to mitigate the dangerous impacts of extreme heat in our renting communities. Failure to address this environmental hazard exposes Maryland renters to continued risk of physical and other harms and perpetuates economic and racial disparities. For these reasons, **Maryland Legal Aid urges the Committee's favorable report on HB0339.**

If you have any questions, please contact:

Zafar Shah
Advocacy Director for Human Right to Housing
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⁹ Montgomery County Code § 26-7; Prince George's County § 13-162.02.

HB 339 Residential Rental Apartments AirConditionio

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Position: INFO


Robin Truiett-Theodorson
Chairperson | Board of Commissioners

Janet Abrahams
President | Chief Executive Officer



March 26, 2025

TO: Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee

FROM: Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO 

RE: House Bill 339 - Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirements

POSITION: Letter of Information

Members of the Judicial Proceedings Committee, please be advised that the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) wishes to submit Information on HB - 339 - Real Property - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirements.



HB 339 requires a landlord to provide air-conditioning in apartment buildings starting June 1, 2025, for newly constructed residential rental units and starting October 1, 2025, for residential rental units that renovations include the replacement or substantial upgrade of electrical systems or heating systems.

HABC is the country's 5th largest public housing authority and Baltimore City's largest provider of affordable housing opportunities. HABC serves nearly 43,000 Baltimore City's low-income individuals through its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs. HABC's public housing inventory currently consists of approximately 6,000 units located at various developments and scattered sites throughout the city. HABC is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is subject to federal regulation that pertain to the operation of its housing programs.

HABC's Capital Funding is appropriated annually by Congress. This funding is subject to change each year depending on administrative priorities and is sometimes reduced significantly. Our public housing sites are 80 years old on average and have immediate capital needs estimated at approximately \$120 million. HABC is in the process of redeveloping a portion of its public housing sites. Three of our current major redevelopment initiatives include the Perkins Somerset Oldtown (PSO) Transformation Plan, Transform Poe and the O'Donnell Heights revitalization plan.

The PSO Transformation Plan includes the demolition and redevelopment of Perkins Homes in East Baltimore into a vibrant mixed-income community with affordable and market-rate housing as well as other amenities and supportive services for residents. The housing plan includes the construction of 629 public housing replacement units, 424 low-income units serving households with an average of 60% AMI, and 307 unrestricted market-rate units spread across the Somerset and Perkins sites.

Housing Authority of Baltimore City | 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

 410.396.3232  www.HABC.org     @BmoreHabc 

The O'Donnell Heights revitalization plan includes the redevelopment of an obsolete public housing site pursuant to a master plan for a mixed-income development of approximately 925 units, including mostly row homes, two-story walk-up flats, and a low-rise apartment building.

Transform Poe serves as a roadmap as HABC, and its developer embarks on redeveloping the Poe Homes public housing site and seeks to improve the quality of life in the surrounding Poppleton-Hollins Market area. Under the plan, 288 distressed public housing units at Poe Homes will be demolished and replaced as part of a new mixed-income community that will support existing and future residents. It also includes infrastructure improvements, public safety strategies, and support services designed to help our families increase economic self-sufficiency and improve educational outcomes.








The new residential units constructed through these redevelopment plans include central air conditioning that meet the requirements of this bill. However, due to the aging infrastructure at our remaining sites that are not currently undergoing redevelopment, a complete overhaul would be needed to support the installation of central air conditioning. A number of these sites, including Latrobe, Douglass and Cherry Hill Homes, have central distribution heating systems, and the electrical infrastructure would not support the installation of central air conditioning in the buildings. We estimate that at Cherry Hill, for example, it would cost upwards of \$15 million just to replace the electrical system. Additionally, the installation of the proper duct work would potentially reduce unit size and may even be prohibitive depending on what is adjacent to the units. Finally, residents would have to be temporarily relocated while the work is being done, adding a significant logistical challenge. Therefore, the only option would be to install window AC units, which would require installation and removal on a seasonal basis and in some cases, would not be feasible at all due to blocked egress, which would violate housing standards.

HUD has specific requirements about how public housing units are to be maintained, and all Public Housing Authorities must comply with these requirements. HUD regulations do not require housing authorities to provide or install air conditioning units for residents. HUD requires a "reasonable accommodation" for air conditioning usage if the resident demonstrates a need. This accommodation would be reflected in the utility allowance provided to the resident and would be above and beyond what a resident receives for a baseline utility allowance.

HABC's public housing residents can purchase and install window air conditioner units when central air conditioning is not provided. The window where the air conditioner is to be installed must not be used for an emergency exit. As referenced above, if an air conditioning unit is installed in a residence with only one emergency exit, it would be considered a blocked egress, violating HUD regulations. This would result in a finding on our yearly HUD inspections, potentially impacting on our funding and our ability to provide housing.

The current bill is unclear as to what activities would constitute a substantial upgrade to heating or electrical systems. HABC regularly makes routine repairs and maintenance upgrades to enhance the reliability of systems on our properties. Therefore, we request that clarity and more specific details about what is considered a "substantial" upgrade that would trigger the requirements of this bill.

Housing Authority of Baltimore City | 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21202







 410.396.3232  www.HABC.org     @BmoreHabc 

For the reasons discussed above, the Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) respectfully request to be exempted from House Bill 339, thereby allowing us to continue to follow HUD regulations regarding air conditioning usage.

Respectfully submitted:

Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO

Housing Authority of Baltimore City | 417 East Fayette Street, Baltimore, MD 21202

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John Lopos Testimony Maryland final.pdf

Uploaded by: John Lopos

Position: INFO

Board of Directors

March 24, 2025

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Chief Executive Officer
John Lopos

On behalf of National Sleep Foundation (NSF), thank you for allowing this written testimony that provides information relevant to the review of and action on HB0339, the “air conditioning” bill introduced by Maryland Delegate Mary Lehman, which has been assigned to the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee for hearing on Wednesday, March 26 at 1PM. NSF’s expert perspective can help the sleep health of Maryland’s citizens. For note, Maryland has precedents supporting sleep health and safety, as the Maryland DOT joined with NSF on our 2022 Drowsy Driving Prevention campaign.

There’s only one National Sleep Foundation, with our organizational website located at theNSF.org. NSF is a 35-year-old independent 501c3 non-profit headquartered in Washington DC. Our mission is to educate people about the importance of sleep for health and well-being. One of our goals is for community, infrastructure and environments to respect sleep health. Our promise to the public is to help anyone and everyone be their Best Slept Self®. One critical focus in our Best Slept Self model is for people to prioritize and maintain a healthy sleep environment: one that is cool, dark and quiet. Individual needs can be different, but our evidence-based recommendation for sleeping-room temperature is in the range of 60-67 degrees Fahrenheit. Simply put, air conditioners in rental units can help to maintain a cool sleep environment that is conducive to good sleep health.

National Sleep Foundation’s 2025 independent, nationally representative Sleep Health Check™ research with over 1,300 American adults yielded the following four results:

1. Nearly 1/3 of US adults sleep in a cool, quiet, and dark environment 3 days or less during the week. This is a target for improvement.
2. Climate control is Americans’ highest ranked and most important home feature they think can help them and their family sleep better.
3. 53% of US adults said they would pay MORE on rent or a mortgage for a home designed to help them/their family sleep better.
4. 45% of US adults said they would pay more than their CURRENT rent or mortgage for a home designed to help them/their family sleep better.

Consistent with our goals, NSF would support efforts in the built environment that help improve sleep for health and well-being.

Sincerely,



John G. Lopos
CEO