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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION
HOUSING UNIT**

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March 6, 2026

To: The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

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

Re: House Bill 1456 – Consumer Protection - Residential Property Advertisement -
Ownership Verification (Support)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 1456 sponsored by Delegates Embry, Boyce, Lehman, and Wu. House Bill 1456 simply requires entities that advertise rental properties to the public to verify that the advertisement is being offered by the owner or an agent of the owner.

Increasingly, scam artists are using third party listing sites to post fake advertisements for rental properties.¹ These fake advertisements lure unsuspecting consumers into seeking to rent units that are not available. Often, consumers then expend significant amounts of money in “rent” and “security deposits” for a unit that they will not be able to occupy. Indeed, the Division has received complaints from consumers who have paid money to scammers and then were forced to scramble to find alternative housing.

These practices harm consumers both financially and through the possibility of identity theft after they have provided sensitive information including full names, birth dates, and sometimes Social Security Numbers. House Bill 1456’s requirement that the entity hosting the advertisement confirm the offer is from the owner or agent would assist in disrupting these scams before they reach vulnerable consumers.

¹ See Federal Trade Commission, Rental Listing Scams, <https://consumer.ftc.gov/articles/rental-listing-scams>.

For these reasons, the Division recommends the Economic Matters Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 1456.

cc: The Honorable Elizabeth Embry, *et al.*
Members, Economic Matters Committee