

CAROLYN A. QUATTROCKI
Chief Deputy Attorney General

LEONARD J. HOWIE III
Deputy Attorney General

CARRIE J. WILLIAMS
Deputy Attorney General

SHARON S. MERRIWEATHER
Deputy Attorney General

ZENITA WICKHAM HURLEY
Deputy Attorney General



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

ANTHONY G. BROWN
Attorney General

WILLIAM D. GRUHN
Division Chief

KAREN M. VALENTINE
Deputy Division Chief

PETER V. BERNIS
General Counsel

CHRISTIAN E. BARRERA
Chief of Staff

KIRA WILPONE-WELBORN
Unit Chief

February 3, 2025

To: The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama
Chair, Economic Matters

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

Re: House Bill 62 – Anne Arundel County - Summons for Actions to Repossess for Failure
to Pay Rent - Alterations (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 62 sponsored by Delegate Gary Simmons. House Bill 62 seeks to ensure Anne Arundel County renters are provided with sufficient time to seek counsel and to be heard before a District Court Judge after a failure to pay rent filing. Specifically, House Bill 62 requires that any summons on a failure to pay rent complaint be served at least 7 days before any trial and that any failure to pay summons cannot be served if there are 101 or more matters already scheduled for the proposed hearing date.

Landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division, including complaints from tenants facing eviction actions. When the Division receives complaints from tenants facing eviction, we refer them to legal service agencies for representation. However, these referrals are only effective if the tenant has sufficient time between receiving the complaint and the scheduled hearing. House Bill 62 seeks to provide such time to ensure tenants facing eviction can seek legal counsel, take time off work, and seek childcare and other support services.

Additionally, House Bill 62 seeks to ensure tenants, with or without representation, have a full opportunity to be heard by limiting the number of proceedings in a day to 100. Presently with batch filings, District Courts can see case loads from one property owner that exceed 100 cases. The Division is aware of batch filings that exceed 200 cases. When the courts have so

many cases scheduled for one day it can severely limit the amount of time the court has to adjudicate individual claims and defenses. House Bill 62's proposal for a limitation of 100 cases per day would limit these batch filings and ensure tenants have a full opportunity to have their cases heard, while easing burdens on the Access to Counsel Program.

As such, the Division requests the Economic Matters Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 62.

cc: The Honorable Gary Simmons
Members, Economic Matters Committee