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**STATE OF MARYLAND  
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CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION  
HOUSING UNIT**

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March 31, 2026

To: The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

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

Re: Senate Bill 12 –Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirement  
(SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENT)

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The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports Senate Bill 12 sponsored by Senator Chris West. Senate Bill 12 would (a) require newly constructed residential rental units to provide air conditioning from June to October and (b) 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 like 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.<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill 12 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 concerning apartments that are excessively hot during the summer.

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<sup>1</sup> 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>).

Although Senate Bill 12 would help many tenants throughout the State, it also would expressly preempt more stringent local laws governing air conditioning requirements that are already in place, and as such could disrupt (a) the enforcement of those local air conditioning standards that counties and cities have determined are necessary to protect their residents and that landlords are already complying with or anticipate complying with, and (b) tenants' current understanding of what is required by their landlord.

Accordingly, the Division requests that the Economic Matters Committee give Senate Bill 12 a favorable report with an amendment striking lines 30-33 on page two.

cc: The Honorable Chris West  
Members, Economic Matters Committee