

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 313 – Landlord and Tenant - Residential Housing - Rental Applications and
Tenant Screening (SUPPORT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 313 sponsored by Delegate Vaughn Stewart. House Bill 313 requires material information to be provided to prospective tenants before they apply for a rental unit. Specifically, House Bill 313 requires landlords to inform prospective tenants about the criteria that would result in a denial and prohibits landlords from considering certain restricted information.

The Consumer Protection Act (“CPA”) mandates the Division “take strong protective and preventive steps to investigate unlawful consumer practices, to assist the public in obtaining relief from these practices, and to prevent these practices from occurring in Maryland.” Com. Law § 13-102. As such, the Division mediates and investigates complaints from Maryland consumers regarding unfair, abusive, and deceptive trade practices, and seeks to remediate violations of the Act through mediation and enforcement action. Indeed, landlord-tenant complaints are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division.

If there are specific criteria that a landlord considers when evaluating a rental application, that information is a material fact that must be disclosed. Likewise, a landlord that considers information that is shielded from public inspection could be committing an unfair practice. House Bill 313 makes clear that certain material information must be provided in a written disclosure to prospective tenants before they pay an application fee, and that after an application

is submitted only relevant and publicly available information is considered in determining an applicant's worthiness.

As such, the Division requests the Economic Matters Committee issue a favorable report on House Bill 313.

cc: The Honorable Vaughn Stewart
Members, Economic Matters Committee