



SB941: Department of Housing and Community Development - Severe Health and Safety Risk Properties - Intervention Plan

Position: Favorable

April 2, 2026

The Honorable Kris Valderrama, Chair
Economic Matters Committee
Room 230, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
cc: Members, House Economic Matters

Chair Valderrama and Members of the Committee:

Economic Action Maryland Fund urges a favorable report on SB941, which would expand the duties of the Office of Landlord and Tenant Affairs to create a meaningful database and set of interventions for properties that are in continued noncompliance with or violation of local codes, or hazardous or distressed.

While we are comfortable with most of the amendments added by this committee on the House crossfire, **we respectfully request that the limitation to 50 or more units not be included in the final bill.** The intent language provides sufficient guardrails to DHCD without this language (found on page 2, line 7 of HB1218 as amended).

For the vast majority of the state, there is little to no meaningful licensing and code enforcement authority to tackle landlords whose properties are health and safety risks. Economic Action Maryland Fund's tenant advocacy program advances housing justice in Maryland through direct service, research, and advocacy. We assist with landlord-tenant issues and provide tenants' rights information and education. Since 2019, out of almost 6500 tenant households assisted, 1,365 - 21% - of those were related to habitability issues. Not all of those complaints would rise to the level of uninhabitability required to fall under this legislation, but it speaks to how pervasive health and safety issues are with Maryland's housing supply.

This bill would create a mechanism to address the worst of the worst properties in Maryland, those that are in persistent and prolonged violation of codes, distressed, or hazardous. Addressing these homes not only provides much needed assistance to tenants, but would stabilize neighborhoods that suffer from the safety hazards and blight these properties create.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB941.

Sincerely, Jennifer Bevan-Dangel, Deputy Director

Economic Action (formerly the Maryland Consumer Rights Coalition) champions economic rights and housing justice through advocacy, research, consumer education, and direct service. Our 12,500 supporters include consumer advocates, practitioners, and low-income and working families throughout Maryland.

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