

SB0929-EEE_MACO_SUP.pdf

Uploaded by: Karrington Anderson

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

Senate Bill 929

Home Improvement Contractors - Disaster Mitigation Services - Regulation and Prohibition

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: March 5, 2026

From: Karrington Anderson

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 929. This bill authorizes counties to impose limitations on in-person solicitation of disaster victims by contractors offering these services, including limits on the hours and areas where solicitation may occur.

Additionally, this bill alters the definition of home improvement to include disaster mitigation services for purposes of contractor licensing and regulation. These services include boarding up windows or doors to secure a building, demolishing a structure to prevent further damage, setting water mitigation equipment, tarping or caulking a damaged roof or building, and securing a wall or roof to prevent additional harm. By clarifying that these activities fall within the home improvement regulatory framework, the bill ensures that contractors performing this work are subject to appropriate oversight and accountability.

In the wake of a fire, flood, or other emergency, residents are often in shock, displaced, and navigating insurance claims. Unfortunately, this moment of vulnerability can attract predatory actors who overcharge for repairs, demand substantial upfront payments, perform substandard work, or fail to perform the work at all. In some cases, inflated invoices submitted to insurance carriers reduce the funds ultimately available to homeowners to fully rebuild and recover.

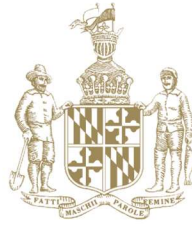
SB 929 provides counties with a meaningful tool to address these practices while preserving flexibility to tailor protections to local circumstances. The bill does not mandate action; rather, it authorizes counties to respond when necessary to protect residents following a disaster. This measured, permissive approach respects local control and recognizes that counties are often on the front lines of disaster response and recovery.

For these reasons, MACo respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 929.

SB 929 Official Sponsor Testimony of Senator Kevin

Uploaded by: Kevin M. Harris

Position: FAV



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Official Sponsor Testimony in Support of SB 929: Home Improvement Contractors –
Disaster Mitigating Services – Regulation and Prohibition
Testimony of Senator Kevin M. Harris**

Chair Feldman, Vice-Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

The intent of SB 929 is to restrict predatory business practices by home improvement contractors after a disaster. Exploitative solicitations after disasters have long been reported across Maryland, emphasizing the urgent need for protection against predatory business behavior.

The home improvement contract a homeowner enters must comply with the Maryland-Door-to-Door Sales Act, and include a notice informing the homeowner of their right to rescind within five days. The contractor must also be licensed by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission.

SB 929 outlines “disaster” as a serious event that causes harm to a home, building, or other structure and requires emergency response services. It intends to assist all victims of disasters by emphasizing that the existence of a disaster is not contingent on the declaration of a State of Emergency by the federal government or the Governor, or a local disaster declaration.

It clearly defines a “disaster mitigating service” as any service that includes boarding up windows or doors to secure a building, demolishing a structure to prevent further damage, setting water mitigation equipment, tarping or caulking a roof or building after damage, and securing a wall or roof, to prevent further damage. It defines a home improvement contract as an oral or written agreement between a contractor and owner for the contractor to perform a home improvement.

SB 929 allows homeowners to rescind home improvement contracts for disaster mitigation services within five days of entering. Under the amendments to this bill, a homeowner will only be liable to pay an amount that is a fair and reasonable value for the necessary work performed under the Home Improvement contract prior to the cancellation.

In the amendments, it is also marked that it is a fraudulent act for a contractor offering home repair or remodeling services for damages to a private residence, to directly or indirectly pay or otherwise compensate an insured, or offer to pay or compensate an insured, for any part of the insured’s deductible under the insured’s property or casualty insurance policy if payment for the services will be made from the proceeds of that policy.

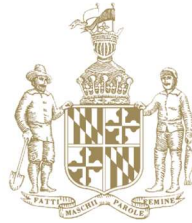
KEVIN M. HARRIS

Legislative District 27

Calvert, Charles, and Prince George's
Counties

—

Education, Energy, and the
Environment Committee



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THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Recent victims of disasters are vulnerable, and certain service companies exploit this vulnerability in order to market and sell their services. SB 929 works to prevent predatory business practices that rely on over-charging and fraud of the inducement.

The bill ensures the dignity of victims of disasters and their right to fair and proper assistance for their damages.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable committee report on SB 929.

SB929 EconAction FAV.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Marceline White

Position: FAV



SB929 Home Improvement Contractors - Disaster Mitigation Services - Regulation and Prohibition
Position: FAV

March 5, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman, Chair
Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401
Cc: Members of the Committee

Chair Feldman and members of the committee,

Economic Action writes in support of SB929 which brings disaster mitigation services under the purview of the Maryland Home Improvement Commission and establishes a 5 day right of rescission for a homeowner who agrees to a contract with a disaster mitigation service.

The Maryland Home Improvement Commission provides oversight, education, and enforcement for Maryland's home improvement contractors, including a Guaranty Fund to redress homeowners' issues under certain circumstances. By expanding MHIC's scope to include disaster mitigation specialists, homeowners and property owners will gain additional consumer protections.

Disaster mitigation specialists provide remediation and emergency support in case of serious events such as fire, natural disaster, or similar creates substantial damages to a building. Oftentimes, mitigation specialists may approach homeowners immediately after a fire or natural disaster and offer their services. While many are legitimate businesses, some bad actors may pressure vulnerable and shocked homeowners into signing costly contracts, or may disappear entirely once the contractor has received the initial payment.

SB929 expands protections for vulnerable homeowners and property owners by expanding oversight, disclosures, and right of rescission to disaster victims.

For all these reasons we support SB929 and urge a favorable report.

Best,

Marceline White
Executive 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.

2209 Maryland Ave · Baltimore, MD 21218 | www.econaction.org
Marceline White · Marceline@EconAction.org | Jennifer Bevan-Dangel · Jennifer@EconAction.org

SB 929_IAB_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryson Popham

Position: FWA



Insurance Agents
& Brokers

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **SB 929 – Home Improvement Contractors- Disaster Mitigation Services- Regulation and Prohibition – FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Insurance Agents and Brokers of Maryland (IA&B), a trade association comprised of nearly 200 independent agencies employing approximately 1,800 Maryland insurance producers, we respectfully submit this letter of support to SB 929 with amendments.

In the aftermath of severe weather events, homeowners are often placed in the vulnerable position of needing repairs. Unfortunately, some contractors employ deceptive, high-pressure sales tactics to coerce consumers into contractual obligations that may lead to unexpected charges and significant financial burdens. These tactics, such as offering to pay an insurance deductible offering to help a consumer with their insurance claim, or falsely misrepresenting regular wear-and-tear as storm damage, can further mislead consumers into assuming that their insurance policy will cover the loss. When a claim is denied, homeowners may be left responsible for costs they did not anticipate.

This issue has drawn the attention of the Maryland Insurance Administration, which in 2022 issued a consumer advisory warning homeowners about dishonest roofing contractors making unsolicited offers to inspect roofs for storm damage. The Maryland Insurance Administration advises consumers not to trust unsolicited repair offers, particularly when a contractor references insurance coverage.

IA&B supports SB 929's strengthening of consumer protections by providing homeowners five days to rescind a signed contract, affording them critical time to further review terms and make an informed decision. Additionally, IA&B supports efforts to prohibit contractors from paying an insured's deductible, regardless of whether it is done with the explicit intention of defrauding an insurer, and to prohibit contractors from negotiating a claim on behalf of a consumer, a responsibility that Maryland law wisely entrusts to a licensed insurance adjuster.

Together, these provisions create a fairer and stronger regulatory framework that protects Maryland consumers in the wake of severe weather events. For these reasons, IA&B respectfully urges a favorable report with amendments on SB 929.

Sincerely,

John Savant
Government Affairs Director



Amendments to House Bill 1351 and Senate Bill 929

By repealing and reenacting with amendments.

Article -Insurance Article

Section 27-407.2

Annotated Code of Maryland

By adding to

Article- Insurance

27-407-3

Annotated Code of Maryland

On Page 3 After Line 12 Insert:

(VI) TREE SERVICES OR REMOVAL; OR

(VII) WATER REMEDIATION SERVICES OF A BUILDING OR PART OF A BUILDING TO RESTORE, CLEAN, SANITIZE, OR RESTORE A PROPERTY TO A SAFE AND HABITABLE CONDITION

On Page 5 Lines 33 Delete line 33 and insert

AMOUNT INDICATED IN THE CONTRACT, FAIR AND REASONABLE VALUE FOR THE NECESSARY WORK PERFORMED UNDER THE HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT PRIOR TO THE CANCELLATION.

On page 6 line 7 Delete Line 7 and insert

NOT TO EXCEED \$ _____ (FILL IN AMOUNT) AND _____ (OWNER INITIALS).”.

FOR THE FAIR AND REASONABLE VALUE FOR THE NECESSARY WORK PERFORMED UNDER THE HOME IMPROVEMENT CONTRACT PRIOR TO THE CANCELLATION.

On Page 6 after line 25 and before line 26 insert:

Insurance Article
27-407.2

Compensation from Contractors to Pay Any Part of Insured’s Deductible

It is a fraudulent act for a contractor offering home repair or remodeling services for damages to a private residence to directly or indirectly pay or otherwise compensate an insured, or offer or promise to pay or compensate an insured, ~~with the intent to defraud an insurer,~~ for any part of the insured's deductible under the insured's property or casualty insurance policy if payment for the services will be made from the proceeds of the policy.

27-407.3

COMPENSATION FOR REFERRAL TO A CONTRACTOR

ANY PERSON, OTHER THAN AN INSURER OR ITS AGENT THAT ADJUSTS, OR NEGOTIATES A CLAIM ON BEHALF OF AN INSURANCE CONSUMER SHALL NOT OFFER PAYMENT FOR REFERRAL TO A CONTRACTOR OR PROVIDER OF SERVICES FOR REPAIR OR REPLACEMENT OF A RESIDENTIAL STRUCTURE.

SB 929_MAMIC_FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Bryson Popham

Position: FWA



191 Main Street, Suite 310 – Annapolis MD 21401 – 410-268-6871

March 3, 2026

The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 929 -*Home Improvement Contractors - Disaster Mitigation Services - Regulation and Prohibition*
FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (MAMIC), we support Senate Bill 929 with amendments.

MAMIC is comprised of 12 mutual insurance companies that are headquartered in Maryland and neighboring states. Approximately one-half of our members are domiciled in Maryland, and are key contributors and employers in our local communities. Together, MAMIC members offer a wide variety of insurance products and services and provide coverage for thousands of Maryland citizens.

MAMIC members have long supported legislative efforts to address consumer abuses in the home improvement business. Specifically, MAMIC's interest has focused on damage occurring following storms, when consumers are most vulnerable and susceptible to misrepresentations. Broader legislation, known as "storm chaser" bills, have been enacted in a number of other states to protect their consumers. Senate Bill 929 has a reduced scope when compared to other storm-chaser legislation, and that may be a subject for future legislation in Maryland. Today, with the amendments proposed by our national association, the National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies (NAMIC), Senate Bill 929 is a good start. We look forward to working with this Committee in future legislative sessions to expand this important consumer protection effort.

We recommend a favorable report on Senate Bill 929 with the attached amendments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Melissa Shelley
President, MAMIC

cc: Bryson Popham

Amendments to House Bill 1351 and Senate Bill 929

By repealing and reenacting with amendments.

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Section 27-407.2

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SENATE BILL 929.pdf

Uploaded by: landon karaberis

Position: FWA

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

Senate Bill 929

Home Improvement Contractors – Disaster Mitigation Services – Regulation and Prohibition

Chair and Members of the Committee,

My name is **Landon Karaberis**, and I am the **Co-Owner of Karaberis Restoration**, a Maryland-based disaster mitigation and emergency response company. I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony regarding **Senate Bill 929**.

I support the **intent of this legislation**, which is to protect homeowners during vulnerable moments following a disaster. Consumer protections are essential, and responsible contractors support transparency and fair standards.

However, **SB 929 in its current form raises several practical concerns related to emergency mitigation operations**, and I respectfully offer several amendments that would help accomplish the bill's goals while ensuring Maryland homeowners continue to receive immediate disaster mitigation services when they need them most.

Emergency Mitigation Is Fundamentally Different From Traditional Home Improvement

SB 929 expands the definition of “home improvement” to include disaster mitigation services such as boarding windows, tarping roofs, setting water mitigation equipment, and stabilizing structures.

While these services involve work performed on residential structures, **disaster mitigation is fundamentally emergency response work**, not traditional home improvement.

When disasters occur, mitigation contractors are called to respond immediately in order to:

- Prevent mold growth
- Prevent structural collapse
- Stop additional water intrusion
- Protect the safety of occupants

Unlike planned remodeling or renovation work, mitigation services are performed under urgent conditions where **delays can significantly increase property damage**.

An amendment that **clearly distinguishes emergency mitigation stabilization from traditional home improvement projects** would help ensure that regulations designed for remodeling projects do not unintentionally delay emergency response.

Concerns Regarding the Five-Day Rescission Provision

Section **8-501.1** allows an owner to rescind a disaster mitigation contract within five days.

While the intent of this provision is understandable, disaster mitigation services are typically **performed immediately upon arrival**. Equipment is deployed, labor is mobilized, and stabilization work begins within hours.

Allowing rescission after services have already been performed may create uncertainty regarding payment for work already completed.

This could unintentionally discourage contractors from responding immediately during emergencies.

A practical amendment would clarify that:

- The rescission right applies to **future services not yet performed**, and
- Contractors remain entitled to **reasonable compensation for emergency mitigation services already provided**.

This approach would preserve consumer protections while ensuring emergency responders are not placed at unreasonable financial risk.

Avoiding Delays in Emergency Response

Mitigation services are intended to **reduce the overall severity of damage following a disaster**.

If contractors must navigate expanded contractual requirements before beginning emergency stabilization work, response times may be delayed.

Even short delays can significantly increase the risk of:

- Mold development
- Structural deterioration
- Escalating repair costs
- Larger insurance claims

Public policy should encourage **rapid stabilization of damaged properties** in order to minimize harm to homeowners.

Existing Industry Oversight

Disaster mitigation contractors in Maryland already operate under several layers of regulation, including:

- Licensing through the **Maryland Home Improvement Commission**
- Oversight from insurance carriers
- Consumer protection statutes
- Laws governing unfair or deceptive trade practices

For this reason, any additional regulations should be carefully tailored to avoid duplicating existing protections or unintentionally discouraging legitimate emergency service providers.

Ensuring Consistent Standards Across Maryland

SB 929 allows counties to impose limitations on in-person solicitation following disasters.

While consumer protection is important, allowing different solicitation rules across counties could create inconsistent regulatory environments and confusion for both contractors and homeowners.

Consideration should be given to ensuring **clear and consistent statewide standards** so that both homeowners and contractors understand their rights and responsibilities.

Conclusion

SB 929 raises important issues regarding consumer protection following disasters, and I appreciate the General Assembly's attention to this matter.

With thoughtful amendments that:

- Recognize the unique nature of emergency mitigation work
- Ensure contractors are compensated for services already performed
- Avoid delays in emergency response
- Maintain clear and consistent statewide standards

this legislation could achieve its goal of protecting homeowners while also preserving the ability of mitigation professionals to respond quickly when disasters occur.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Landon Karaberis

Co-Owner

Karaberis Restoration

SB 929 Disaster Mitigation Services FWA 03052026

Uploaded by: Nancy Egan

Position: FWA



American Property Casualty Insurance Association

Senate Education, Energy & Environment Committee

SB 929 Home Improvement Contractors - Disaster Mitigation Services - Regulation and Prohibition

March 5, 2025

Support with Amendments

The American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA) is a national trade organization whose members write approximately 71.4% of the total property casualty market in Maryland. APCIA would like to express its support for Senate Bill 929 which will help to protect home and property owners after major catastrophic events when they are most vulnerable.

It is an unfortunate truth that following major casualty events some bad actors seize upon the opportunity to promise remodeling or repair services quickly, seeking to secure payment or insurance proceeds, with no intention of fulfilling the promises, or to intentionally overcharge for such services. This is practice insurers have seen with regularity in other states following hurricanes and wildfires in recent years. We believe that SB 929 protects consumers by permitting the cancellation of such contracts up to 5 days.

Licensed and responsible contractors acting in good faith and seeking to help home and property owners get back on their feet will not be negatively impacted by the cancellation provision. Rather, the cancellation clause will allow those impacted by a disaster to take stock and assess what needs to be done themselves. These home and property owners will then be able to reach out to local and reputable contractors instead of being pressured into accepting the first solicitation that arrives at their door.

APCIA has worked with the sponsor and other interested parties to make some amendments to add some additional contractors who regularly provide services immediately following a loss. The language also cleans up what is due upon cancellation of the contract. There is also language to be added to the insurance article removing language about the intent to defraud when a contractor promises to pay for the deductible. In addition, insurers have seen a practice of contractors paying referral fees after a catastrophic loss.

Specifically, the fair and reasonable value of work actually performed clause protects homeowners from inflated or opportunistic charges when a project is canceled mid-stream. Consumer protection frameworks around home improvement contracts should address situations where homeowners are charged for work not performed, padded overhead, or excessive termination fees that are disproportionate to the benefit received. By anchoring payment to “fair and reasonable value for the necessary work performed,” SB 929 improves price transparency, predictability, and fairness, reducing the risk that consumers, who are often in stressful post loss situations, will be pressured into paying for unperformed or unnecessary services.

Removing the phrase “with the intent to defraud an insurer” is vital because proving specific intent has proven in practice to be too high a burden in enforcing this provision, functionally undermining the effectiveness of law. As it is written, the requirement to demonstrate intent necessitates evidence of a contractor’s subjective state of mind rather than objective conduct – something that is nearly impossible to prove. By eliminating the mental state element of the bad actor, the statute can be enforced for actions such as paying or rebating deductibles tied to insurance proceeds, which are damaging to consumers through distortion of the claims process, without needing to prove what the contractor internally intended. Without this change, the current statute will continue to have no functional value in reducing fraudulent acts in the claims process.



The Addition on 27-407.3: The addition of this section is beneficial to consumers and insurers as it reduces the use of referral payments that create financial incentives to steer insurance consumers toward contractors regardless of actual need or cost. This is a practice that is widely recognized as facilitating kickbacks and inflated or unnecessary insurance claims. By prohibiting compensation for referrals in claims-funded repairs, this new section cuts off a common mechanism used to manufacture or exaggerate losses, making fraud easier to prevent and prosecute based on objective conduct rather than intent. Eliminating referral payments also preserves the integrity of the claims process by ensuring contractor selection is based on merit and consumer choice, excluding financial gain from external third parties seeking to interject themselves in the claims process, and thereby protecting policyholders and reducing fraud-driven premium pressure.

APCIA supports legislation designed to regulate and deter unethical practices by bad actors who exploit homeowners following a disaster or loss. We support the adoption of a five-day cancellation period for home and property owners – allowing them time assess the damage themselves and to engage with reputable and trusted contractors following a loss.

For these reasons, APCIA urges the Committee to provide a favorable report on Senate Bill 929.

Nancy J. Egan,

State Government Relations Counsel, Mid-Atlantic,

Nancy.egan@APCIA.org

Cell: 443-841-4174

Amendments to House Bill 1351 and Senate Bill 929

ADD:

By repealing and reenacting with amendments,

Article -Insurance Article

Section 27-407.2

Annotated Code of Maryland

By adding to

Article- Insurance Article

27-407-3

Annotated Code of Maryland

On Page 3 After Line 12 Insert:

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These types of contractors should be included. It is an unfortunate truth that following major weather or fire events some bad actors seize upon the opportunity to provide tree services or water repair services quickly, seeking to secure payment or insurance proceeds, and intentionally overcharge for such services. This is practice insurers have seen with regularity in other states following hurricanes and wildfires in recent years.

On Page 5 Lines 33 Delete line 33 and insert

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The fair and reasonable value of work actually performed clause protects homeowners from inflated or opportunistic charges when a project is canceled mid-stream. Consumer protection frameworks around home improvement contracts should address situations where homeowners are charged for work not performed, padded overhead, or excessive termination fees that are disproportionate to the benefit received. By anchoring payment to “fair and reasonable value for the necessary work performed,” the HB1351 improves price transparency, predictability, and fairness, reducing the risk that consumers, who are often in stressful post loss situations, will be pressured into paying for unperformed or unnecessary services.

On Page 6 after line 25 and before line 26 insert, the following language from the Insurance Article Adding in 27-407.2 with changes deleting language. Adding new section 27.403.2

Insurance Article

27-407.2 Compensation from Contractors to Pay Any Part of Insured's Deductible

It is a fraudulent act for a contractor offering home repair or remodeling services for damages to a private residence to directly or indirectly pay or otherwise compensate an insured, or offer or promise to pay or compensate an insured, ~~with the intent to defraud an insurer~~, for any part of the insured's deductible under the insured's property or casualty insurance policy if payment for the services will be made from the proceeds of the policy.

27-407.3 COMPENSATION FOR REFERRAL TO A CONTRACTOR

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Removing the phrase “with the intent to defraud an insurer” is vital because proving specific intent has proven in practice to be too high a burden in enforcing this provision, functionally undermining the effectiveness of law. As it is written, the requirement to demonstrate intent necessitates evidence of a contractor's subjective state of mind rather than objective conduct – something that is nearly impossible to prove. By eliminating the mental state element of the bad actor, the statute can be enforced for actions such as paying or rebating deductibles tied to insurance proceeds, which are damaging to consumers through distortion of the claims process, without needing to prove what the contractor internally intended. Without this change, the current statute will continue to have no functional value in reducing fraudulent acts in the claims process.

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8700 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 1200S, Chicago, IL 60631-3512 | 847-297-7800

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SB929 Disaster scenes Ramos testimony 3.26.pdf

Uploaded by: Odette Ramos

Position: FWA



Odette Ramos

Baltimore City Councilwoman

District 14

(410) 396 - 4814

odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov

100 N. Holliday Street, Room 553

Baltimore MD 21202

Testimony

**SB929 – Home Improvement Contractors– Disaster Mitigation Services – Regulation and Prohibition
SUPPORT with Sponsor Amendments**

Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and Environment Committee:

I am writing to urge your support for **SB929– Home Improvement Contractors– Disaster Mitigation Services – Regulation and Prohibition**

As the Baltimore City Councilwoman representing the 14th District, I attend all of our fires. At each fire I have supported our residents who have just suffered significant trauma after escaping from danger and watching their house burn.

I also see predatory companies ready to take advantage of our residents who have just been through a crisis. These companies approach survivors of fires promising the homeowner they will secure the property once the fire department leaves. The challenge here is that they do more than boarding up, and charge insurance companies significantly; so much so that I have had two constituents run out of money to rebuild as a result.

SB929 as amended creates a definition of these companies, assures they are regulated by the Maryland Home Improvement Commission, and allows for people who ended up signing with the company to get out of the contract within five days. It also allows jurisdictions to put limits on in-person solicitations.

By passing this legislation, you are saving residents who have been through significant trauma from falling into the hands of these emergency contractors who do not have the resident's best interest at heart.

In Baltimore City, I introduced a companion bill that sets up an emergency scene, and no unauthorized person can be admitted into that scene. Only first responders, city agencies and employees that assist residents can be admitted into the scene. Since the emergency scene takes place for hours or days, this gives the survivors of a fire or emergency time to contact their insurance companies and be strategic about the next steps for their homes and their lives. My bill passed unanimously and was implemented in Baltimore City in August of last year.

I am honored to work with Delegate Amprey on this issue, as we supported our residents together on site at a major fire in our districts that impacted 14 homes and where two lives were lost. We saw at this fire, and every fire firsthand the behavior of these companies. That's why we are before you today.

I urge your favorable report for SB929 with the sponsor's amendments. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions. I can be reached on 410-396-4814 or via email at odette.ramos@baltimorecity.gov.

Respectfully Submitted:

Odette Ramos, Baltimore City Councilwoman, District 14

SB0929 Testimony Wampler Remodeling.pdf

Uploaded by: Erika Donaldson

Position: UNF

Good afternoon. I respectfully oppose this bill.

Disaster mitigation is emergency work. When a home floods or has fire damage, contractors must respond immediately to prevent mold, structural issues, and further damage. This is not the same as a planned home improvement project. Treating it that way does not reflect the urgent nature of the work.

The bill also allows additional rescission rights after services have started. In an emergency, contractors bring crews and equipment right away and take on significant upfront costs. Allowing contracts to be canceled after work begins creates uncertainty and may slow response times. Homeowners need fast action during a crisis — not delays.

Finally, allowing counties to set different rules on in-person contact creates confusion and inconsistency. After a disaster, many homeowners don't know who to call. Responsible contractors providing information in person can help families stabilize their homes quickly.

Everyone wants to protect homeowners and prevent fraudulent activity. However, current laws already address fraud and misconduct. This bill will cause hurt to reputable local companies that provide critical emergency services and also to Maryland homeowners in need of these services.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for an unfavorable report.

Thank you for your time.

SB 929 - MIA - LOI.pdf

Uploaded by: Marie Grant

Position: INFO

WES MOORE
Governor

ARUNA MILLER
Lt. Governor

MARIE GRANT
Commissioner

JOY Y. HATCHETTE
Deputy Commissioner



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www.insurance.maryland.gov

Date: March 5, 2026

Bill # / Title: Senate Bill 929 - Home Improvement Contractors - Disaster Mitigation Services - Regulation and Prohibition

Committee: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: Letter of Information

The Maryland Insurance Administration (MIA) appreciates the opportunity to share this Letter of Information relating to Senate Bill 929.

The bill as introduced would revise § 8-101 of the Business Regulation Article to define “disaster mitigation services” and provide that the provision of residential disaster mitigation services constitutes “home improvement.” The MIA understands that the effect of these revisions would be to subject some persons who perform residential disaster mitigation services to licensure requirements and other statutory requirements that apply to home improvement contractors. These revisions fall within the purview of the Maryland Home Improvement Commission.

The bill as introduced would also add two new sections to the Business Regulation Article. These new sections would entitle a homeowner to rescind a disaster mitigation services contract within five days of entering into it, limit the payment liability of a homeowner who exercises this right of rescission to an amount specified and agreed upon in the contract, and authorize a county to impose limits on in-person solicitation of disaster victims by disaster mitigation contractors. The MIA notes that these provisions would establish new consumer protections for vulnerable homeowners in the wake of damage to their homes. The MIA does not offer a position on these provisions of the bill because they fall outside of the MIA’s purview. However, the MIA notes that these provisions do not overlap or conflict with restrictions on in-person solicitation by public adjuster or consumer protections relating to public adjuster contracts established under 2024 Maryland Laws Ch. 826 and codified at § 10-411 of the Insurance Article.

The MIA is aware of amendments that the American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA) proposed in written testimony submitted to the Committee that would alter the Insurance Article. To aid the Committee in its consideration of these amendments, the MIA is sharing

information on the likely impact of the amendments. This input has also been shared with the sponsor.

The APCIA proposes that the bill amend § 27-407.2 of the Insurance Article to remove the requirement that a home repair contractor who compensates or offers to compensate an insured for any portion of the insured's deductible must do so *with intent to defraud an insurer* in order for their conduct to constitute a fraudulent insurance act. By eliminating the specific intent requirement, this proposed amendment would streamline prosecution of such conduct when perpetuated against Maryland consumers.

The APCIA also proposes that the bill add a new section to the Insurance Article. The proposed new section would prohibit any person, other than an insurer or its agent that adjusts or negotiates a claim on behalf of the insured, from offering payment for referral to a contractor for residential repair or replacement services. This proposed amendment seeks to prohibit a contractor that provides one type of service from paying another contractor that a homeowner has hired to perform another type of service in exchange for a referral. In these circumstances, a homeowner dealing with the stress of repairing their home may be vulnerable to high-pressure referral tactics and end up hiring additional contractors to provide unnecessary or over-priced services. In turn, these types of arrangements may inflate home repair costs, including costs that are ultimately covered by homeowner's insurance.

The MIA thanks the Committee for the opportunity to share this information concerning Senate Bill 929, and is available to answer any follow-up questions that the Committee may have.