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March 31, 2026

To: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

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

Re: Senate Bill 130—Environment - Water - Individual Submeters (LETTER OF
INFORMATION)

Senate Bill 130, sponsored by Senator Shaneka Henson, permits an owner, operator, or manager of an apartment complex or mobile home park to install individual submeters that would measure an occupant's actual usage of water and sewer. If an owner, operator, or manager installs submeters then they may only pass on charges they incur from the water service provider. The bill permits occupants with complaints about the use, repair and billing record retention of submeters to submit complaints to the Consumer Protection Division ("Division"), if there is no consumer protection agency in the county or municipality or the agency lacks jurisdiction, among others. Finally, the bill requires the Department of the Environment and the Department of Housing and Community Development to develop regulations on the use and testing of submeters.

The Division typically reserves comment on bills that impose obligations on sister State agencies. However, the Division wants to clarify for the Committee that the Division already receives and mediates landlord-tenant complaints, which are consistently among the top complaints received each year by the Division, including complaints about how tenants are billed for utilities. Specifically, the Consumer Protection Act mandates that 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, including complaints about how tenants are billed for utilities, and seeks to remediate violations of the Act through enforcement actions. Senate Bill 130 would provide an alternative basis for the Division to receive, mediate and investigate complaints about how tenants are billed for utilities.

cc: The Honorable Shaneka Henson
Members, Environment and Transportation Committee