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February 9, 2026

Delegate Marc Korman  
House Environment and Transportation Committee  
250 Taylor House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: **HB252 – FAVORABLE** - Environment - Lead Paint Abatement Services -  
Performance Bond and Liability Insurance

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Committee:

The Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) writes in support of House Bill 252. This Bill would remedy a current fault in the Maryland law by ensuring that families, homeowners and rental property owners who are harmed by lead inspectors and contractors that provide falsified or erroneous lead inspection information or perform lead remediation work in an unsafe manner can reliably collect damages against them in civil court.

GHHI has been at the frontline of lead poisoning prevention for over three decades by helping to elevate Maryland as a national leader and working to reduce childhood lead poisoning by 99% in our state. GHHI provides tenants' rights assistance, rental property owner compliance assistance and legal representation of tenants statewide in Maryland for the repair of lead hazards and other hazardous conditions in homes. In addition to serving as the President and CEO of GHHI, I also serve as the Chair of the Maryland Lead Poisoning Prevention Commission and as a member of the EPA Children's Health Protection Advisory Committee, the CDC Lead Exposure and Prevention Advisory Committee, and the Maryland Green and Healthy Homes Task Force.

On October 3, 2025, in the Circuit Court for Baltimore City, Rodney Bryan Barkley plead guilty to four counts of Falsifying a Lead Paint Risk Reduction Certificate and one count of Operating a Radiation Machine Without Obtaining a License (Case Number: C-24-CR-25-002915). In addition, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) suspended Barkley's accreditation as a lead-certified inspector and has officially invalidated 1,400 lead certificates he had previously issued.

There is no current requirement that lead inspectors or contractors be insured or bonded to be certified by MDE to conduct lead inspections or lead hazard remediation work. Tenants, rental property owners and homeowners who experience harm from inspectors who submit falsified or inaccurate lead reports or lead contractors who fail to use lead safe work practices and are not insured or bonded would not have any meaningful civil recourse against inspectors or contractors that have no insurance, limited assets, or who are effectively insolvent. HB252 would address

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that issue and better protect tenants, occupants and property owners by ensuring that every lead inspector and lead contractor who is certified by MDE has some reasonable form of insurance or bonding.

During the 2025 Maryland General Assembly, the legislature passed HB1367, which revised Maryland Environment Article § 6-850(c) so that “[a] person who falsifies information that is submitted in a report under § 6-818(a)(1)(iii) of this subtitle is liable for a civil penalty not exceeding \$50,000, to be collected in a civil action.” This was intended as a first-line remedy so that tenants and owners who had been harmed by inspectors like Barkley would see that legal consequences are being imposed on those lead inspectors or contractors who harmed them and undermined the integrity of the law. HB1367 imposed civil penalties on inspectors who knowingly falsify certificates to demonstrate compliance with Maryland environmental regulatory requirements. These penalties were needed for inspectors and contractors who falsify inspection certification information to serve as a deterrent to that unlawful and illegal behavior. That legislation did not, however, provide for sufficient monetary remedies for those harmed.

Lead poisoning from lead in paint, dust, and contaminated soil contributes to severe issues such as significant learning disabilities, loss of IQ, speech development problems, attention deficit disorder, poor school performance and violent, aggressive behavior that heavily burdens low-income communities. Lead poisoning especially harms children by contributing to cycles of learning disabilities, poor school performance, steep school dropout rates, and juvenile delinquency that prevent low-income children in Maryland from being able to thrive and which burdens the State through increased special education and criminal justice costs. Children poisoned by lead are also 7 times more likely to drop out of school, 6 times more likely to be involved in the juvenile justice system, and can suffer upwards of \$2 million in lost lifetime earnings.

This legislation is necessary so that tenants, rental property owners and homeowners who have damages due to falsified or erroneous inspection reports by bad actors or lead exposure from improper contractor work practices have greater protections. Requiring a reasonable level of insurance would ensure that tenants and owners have the ability to recover costs for a lead inspector or lead contractor who operates in a fraudulent, unsafe or negligent manner.

For these reasons, we request a Favorable Report on HB252.

Respectfully Submitted,

Signed by:  
**Ruth Ann Norton**  
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Ruth Ann Norton  
President and CEO