

MMHA - 2026 - HB 252 - lead inspectors - bond - fi

Uploaded by: Aaron Greenfield

Position: FAV



Bill Title: House Bill 252, Environment – Lead Paint Abatement Services – Performance Bond and Liability Insurance

Committee: House Environment and Transportation Committee

Date: February 11, 2026

Position: Favorable

This testimony is offered on behalf of the Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA). MMHA is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities. Our members house over 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 252 authorizes the Maryland Department of the Environment to require accredited lead paint abatement service providers to have a reasonable performance bond or liability insurance, ensuring accountability and protection for consumers and the environment. The bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.

MMHA recognizes the importance of ensuring that lead paint abatement services are performed safely and effectively, and we support the intent of this bill. Recently, there have been disturbing reports of fraudulent lead-free certificates being issued in Baltimore City¹. These incidents highlight the need for increased accountability and oversight in the lead paint abatement industry. MMHA supports the bill's requirement for lead paint abatement services providers to be covered by a performance bond or liability insurance, as this can help protect consumers and ensure that providers are held accountable for their work.

However, we have a fundamental question regarding House Bill 252. The bill requires the lead inspector to be insured or bonded, but it is unclear whether the insurance company would still pay out a claim if there was fraud involved. We believe it is essential to clarify this point to ensure that the bill's intent is fully realized. MMHA urges the Committee to consider this question and provide clarity on this issue.

This question notwithstanding, House Bill 252 is a step in the right direction towards ensuring that lead paint abatement services are performed safely and effectively. However, we urge the Committee to provide clarity on the issue of insurance liability in cases of fraud.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 252.

Aaron J. Greenfield, MMHA Director of Government Affairs, 410.446.1992

¹ <https://www.thebanner.com/community/climate-environment/baltimore-fake-lead-free-certificates-rodney-bryan-barkley-3FKISSUPQZFZDMQ2O45JBNUHPQ/>

HB 0252 - ENT - MDH - LOS.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Meghan Lynch

Position: FAV



Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D., Secretary

February 11, 2026

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: House Bill 252 – Environment – Lead Paint Abatement Services – Performance Bond and Liability Insurance – Letter of Support

Dear Chair Korman and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (the Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill (HB) 252 - Environment - Lead Paint Abatement Services - Performance Bond and Liability Insurance. This departmental legislation, requested by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), represents an important step in ensuring that lead abatement activities in Maryland effectively protect the health of families across the State.

The Department works closely with MDE to eliminate childhood lead poisoning, a preventable condition that can cause lasting neurological damage. The primary medical intervention for lead poisoning is removing the child from the source of exposure. As a result, the Department relies heavily on the environmental lead paint abatement industry to make homes safe. However, improper or incomplete lead paint abatement is a known public health hazard. When a contractor disturbs lead paint but lacks the resources to properly clean up lead dust or complete the project, the home may become more dangerous for its occupants and visitors than it was prior to the start of the work.

By authorizing MDE to require performance bonds or liability insurance for accredited abatement providers, this legislation establishes a vital public health safety net. It ensures that, in cases of contractor default or substandard work, financial resources are available to engage a new provider to properly and promptly complete the project and remove toxic hazards. This requirement also provides critical protections for low-income families – who are already at increased risk of lead exposure – by creating a clear path to remediation without placing the financial burden on those affected.¹

In conclusion, HB 252 strengthens Maryland’s lead poisoning prevention infrastructure by ensuring that entities entrusted with removing environmental toxins are financially capable of

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “People at Increased Risk for Childhood Lead Poisoning,” April 10, 2024. Accessed January 26, 2026. <https://www.cdc.gov/lead-prevention/risk-factors/index.html>

standing behind their work. For these reasons, the Department urges a favorable report on HB 252.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Meghan Lynch, Director of Governmental Affairs at meghan.lynch@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Meena Seshamani', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Meena Seshamani, M.D., Ph.D.
Secretary

GHHI Written Testimony - HB252.pdf

Uploaded by: Riley Roshong

Position: FAV



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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

House Bill 252 Written Testimony
February 9, 2026
Page Two

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