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March 26, 2026

TO: The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Chair
Finance Committee

FROM: Hanna Abrams, Assistant Attorney General
Consumer Protection Division

RE: House Bill 952 – Consumer Protection – Companion Chatbots –
Regulation (SUPPORT IN CONCEPT)

The Consumer Protection Division of the Office of the Attorney General (the “Division”) supports House Bill 952 (“HB 952”), in concept. House Bill 952 regulates artificial intelligence chatbots.

Chatbots are regularly trained on data that was scraped indiscriminately from across the internet without anyone’s knowledge or consent, including sensitive personal information.¹ And artificial intelligence companies have already announced plans to integrate targeted advertising functions into their chatbots.² The Division asks that HB 952 be clarified to explicitly state that HB 952 does nothing to abrogate the rights provided to Marylanders under the Maryland Online Data Privacy Act, Md. Code Ann., Com. Law § 14-4701 *et seq.*

Further, chatbots are designed to prioritize user engagement over user well-being. The tendency of chatbots to engage in flattering and sycophantic behavior can exacerbate mental health issues and lead to emotional dependence, among numerous other harms.³ The Division supports creating guardrails around the use of chatbots.

¹ Lauren Leffer, *Your Personal Data Is Probably Being Used to Train Generative AI Models*, Scientific American (Oct. 19, 2023), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/your-personal-information-is-probablybeing-used-to-train-generative-ai-models/>.

² Maxwell Zeff, *Meta Plans to Sell Targeted Ads Based on Data in Your AI Chats*, TechCrunch (Oct. 1, 2025), <https://techcrunch.com/2025/10/01/meta-plans-to-sell-targeted-ads-based-on-data-in-your-ai-chats/>; Shira Ovide, *Here Comes the Advertising in AI Chatbots*, Wash. Post (Jan. 13, 2026), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2026/01/13/advertisinggoogle-ai-mode-chatgpt/>.

³ Stephanie Nguyen *et al.*, *AI Sycophancy & OpenAI*, Georgetown Law Inst. for Technology Law & Policy (Jul. 30 2025), <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/tech-institute/research-insights/insights/tech-brief-ai-sycophancy-openai-2/>; Stephanie Nguyen *et al.*, *AI Sycophancy: Impacts, Harms & Questions*, Georgetown Law Inst. for Technology Law &

The Division, however, recommends clarifying some of the language that appears in HB 952, including:

- 14-1330(a)(3)(ii)(3) should read “a bot that is designed *and used* for business productivity or internal business use.”
- 14-1330(a)(3)(ii)(2)(c): The definition of “companion chatbot” also excludes chatbots that operate within a videogame that are “not a companion chatbot.” This definition is circular and should be clarified to ensure that chatbots that provide feedback during a videogame that leads to mental health harms fall within the bill’s scope.
- A definition for developer should be added as well as a cross-reference to the definition of “controller” in Md. Code Ann., Com. Law § 14-4701.
- 14-1330(d)-(e): The warning obligations on developers and operators should be the same.
- 14-1330(g): The reporting systems should not be limited to “users.”

In addition, artificial intelligence chatbots have been used to create nonconsensual intimate images of real people, including children.⁴ Although HB 952 requires that operators establish and maintain a protocol for preventing a companion chatbot from producing or presenting sexually explicit conduct to a minor user, it fails to address the dissemination nonconsensual intimate images of real people, including children, to adults. House Bill 952 should safeguard both children and adults from becoming victims of nonconsensual intimate images and ensure that those affected have clear avenues for recourse.

The Division asks the Finance Committee to consider these comments when it deliberates over HB 952.

Cc: Delegate Jason C. Buckel *et al.*
Members, Finance Committee

Policy (Aug. 11, 2025), <https://www.law.georgetown.edu/tech-institute/research-insights/insights/aisycophancy-impacts-harms-questions/>.

⁴ Robert Hart and Jess Weatherbed, *X hasn’t really stopped Grok AI from undressing women in the UK*, The Verge (Jan. 14, 2026), <https://www.theverge.com/news/861894/grok-still-undressing-in-uk>; Matt Burgess, *Elon Musk’s Grok ‘Undressing’ Problem Isn’t Fixed*, WIRED (Jan. 15, 2026), <https://www.wired.com/story/elonmusk-grok-undressing-problem-isnt-fixed/>; Attorney General Brown Demands Action from xAI over Grok’s Creating of Nonconsensual Sexual Content (Jan. 23, 2026), <https://oag.maryland.gov/News/Pages/Attorney-General-Brown-Demands-Action-from-xAI-over-Grok%E2%80%99s-Creation-of-Nonconsensual-Sexual-Content.aspx>