



Office of The Mayor Celina R. Benitez

1 Municipal Place, Mount Rainier, Maryland 20712 Telephone: (301) 985-6585 MountRainierMD.org

Date: February 27, 2026

Re: **House Bill 705**

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Members of the Committee:

I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of **HB705**, which establishes the Enforcement Recovery Fund within the Office of the Attorney General.

Municipal governments are on the front lines of protecting residents from consumer fraud, deceptive business practices, environmental harm, price gouging, and other unlawful conduct. However, local governments often lack the legal capacity, financial resources, and specialized expertise necessary to pursue complex, multi-jurisdictional enforcement actions. In these instances, municipalities rely heavily on the Office of the Attorney General to protect our residents and safeguard the public interest.

HB705 strengthens the State's ability to carry out that mission.

By establishing a dedicated Enforcement Recovery Fund supported through enforcement recoveries, the legislation ensures that the Office of the Attorney General has sustainable resources to investigate and litigate complex cases. This structure reduces reliance on General Fund appropriations while enhancing the State's ability to respond swiftly to emerging threats that directly impact local communities.

For municipalities, the benefits are clear:

- **Stronger Consumer Protection**
- **Relief for Local Resources**
- **Improved Multi-State Participation**
- **Enhanced Public Confidence**

Importantly, reinvesting enforcement recoveries into further enforcement promotes accountability and long-term compliance, ultimately reducing violations that burden local governments.

I understand the importance of transparency and oversight in the administration of public funds, and I am confident that with appropriate reporting and legislative review mechanisms, HB705 will strike the right balance between operational flexibility and fiscal accountability.

For local governments that operate with limited budgets but significant responsibility to protect residents, a strong and effective Attorney General's Office is an essential partner.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a favorable report on HB705.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued leadership on public safety and community trust. Please feel free to contact me at 301-985-6585 or via email MayorBenitez@MountRainierMd.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Celina R. Benitez

Mayor Celina R. Benitez, City of Mount Rainier.