



## Maryland Chapter

7338 Baltimore Avenue, Suite 102  
College Park, MD 20740-3211

**Committee: Environment & Transportation**

**Testimony on: HB 744**

**Position: Favorable**

**Hearing Date: February 18, 2020**

The Maryland Sierra Club urges a favorable report on HB 744. This bill would allow tenants to break their leases in unsafe conditions, confront harassment and stalking, defend themselves in court, and organize with their neighbors into tenants' associations. It requires landlords to return security deposits within 30 days of a tenancy ending and reimburse tenants for relocation expenses if a lease is terminated due to threats to health or safety. Landlords would also be required disclose the method used to charge tenants utilities using Ratio Utility billing.

The Sierra Club supports policies which will spur development of affordable and infill housing while upholding tenants' rights.

Increasingly housing density is a critical tool for reducing greenhouse emissions and protecting green space. Our resilience to the threat of climate change begins with our social, cultural and economic resilience, which depends upon inclusive, safe, and fair communities.

Affirmative support for such communities is a natural corollary to the Sierra Club's opposition to sprawl, which promotes automobile dependence destroys natural ecosystems, separates people from each other, increases social inequity, reduces economic security and increases carbon emissions.

Every person has a right to a safe and healthy environment. Over 40% of Marylanders rent their housing. This bill would give basic rights to renters to help secure stable and safe place to live. We urge a favorable report on **HB 744**.

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