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BILL NO.: **SB 223**

TITLE: **Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Actions - Filing Surcharge and Prohibited Lease Provisions**

SPONSOR: **The President**

COMMITTEE: **Judicial Proceedings**

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: **February 3, 2022**

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 223 – Landlord and Tenant - Eviction Actions - Filing Surcharge and Prohibited Lease Provisions. This legislation would raise surcharges assessed by the District Court per civil case for summary ejection, tenant holding over, and breach of lease.

Eviction prevention is a core priority for Baltimore County Executive John Olszewski's administration. Amid the COVID pandemic, as eviction concerns mounted due to an unprecedented wave of unemployment, Baltimore County created the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) to meet the surging demand. By taking advantage of strategic partnerships with organizations such as United Way and other governmental partners, DHCD has prevented thousands of evictions to date and continues to find creative solutions to secure housing for County residents.

SB 223 will further Baltimore County's efforts by setting a higher price for civil actions against tenants for summary ejection, tenant holding over, and breach of lease. This legislation would raise surcharges from a maximum \$8 per case to a maximum \$73 per case. Raising the cost of filing civil action against tenants incentivizes landlords come to creative, equitable solutions with their tenants. With a public health crisis continuing to impact the ability of residents to find employment and care for their loved ones, actions that guarantee continued stable housing have never been more critical.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 223. For more information, please contact Joel Beller, Acting Director of Government Affairs, at jbeller@baltimorecountymd.gov.