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CITY OF BALTIMORE

BRANDON M. SCOTT,  
Mayor



DEPARTMENT OF LAW  
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March 2, 2023

The Honorable President and Members  
of the Baltimore City Council  
Attn: Executive Secretary  
Room 409, City Hall, 100 N. Holliday Street  
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

Re: City Council Bill 23-0357 – Strengthening Renter’s Safety Act

Dear President and City Council Members:

The Law Department has reviewed City Council Bill 23-0357 for form and legal sufficiency. The bill would amend several sections of the City Code in Article 1 and 13 concerning residential rental properties. The bill defines “Priority Dwellings” as those with more than 20 dwelling units that have unabated code violations, excessive 311 calls and other characteristics. The bill requires Priority Dwellings to be inspected by a senior inspector of the Department of Housing and Community Development (“HCD”) at certain intervals in a certain manner. It also allows the public to alert HCD to a building that may be in violation of applicable requirements and provides a timeframe for HCD’s investigation of that complaint.

The bill tasks HCD with posting information about rental licensing in unlicensed buildings, requires building owners to provide certain information when seeking a license, and requires that tenants receive a copy of the building license when applying to rent, and a building inspection report when the building applies for a rental license or renews one. License renewals would be more frequent and cost more for problem buildings requiring enhanced inspection. The bill requires that advertising of rental properties contain a current rental license number.

The bill also requires the collection of certain statistics about residential rentals and tasks HCD with publishing that information and generating an annual report. Finally, the bill also creates a Rental Licensing and Inspection Task Force that provides advice on HCD’s inspection and licensing tasks, reviews data and makes recommendations.

The General Assembly has given the Mayor and City Council broad powers by the to legislate concerning the use and operation of buildings, to authorize a government official to enter property in furtherance of government duties, to license and regulate businesses, and to exercise the police and general welfare powers. City Charter, Art. II, §§ (1), (5) (17), (27). This bill is consistent with these powers. The Law Department approves the bill for form and legal sufficiency.

Very truly yours,



Hilary Ruley  
Chief Solicitor

cc: Ebony Thompson, Acting City Solicitor  
Nina Themelis, Mayor's Office of Government Relations  
Elena DiPietro, Chief Solicitor, General Counsel Division  
Jeff Hochstetler, Chief Solicitor  
Ashlea Brown, Chief Solicitor  
D'ereka Bolden, Assistant Solicitor  
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Teresa Cummings, Assistant Solicitor