

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Land and Materials Administration

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LEAD POISONING PREVENTION COMMISSION February 5, 2026 • 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. • Hybrid Meeting Meeting Minutes

Members Present:

Adam Skolnik	Fred Banks	Nicola Tran
Alexandra Nestadt	Jacob Benzaquen	Ruth Ann Norton
Barbara Moore	Manjula Paul	Susan Kleinhammer
Christina Peusch	Michael Ichniowski	
Cliff Mitchell	Naadiya Hutchinson	

Members Absent:

Mary Washington
Nicole Hart

Guests Present:

A.C. Alrey-City of Cambridge	Denifah Bun-Tejan-MDE	Patrick Connor-CECS
Adewole Adegborioye-MDE	Eunice Johnson-GEO	Rashad Taylor-MDE
Adonna Patterson-MDE	Felicia Graves-MDE	Reva Smith-MWPH
Anastasia Solano-MDE	Jeanny Pope-OAG	Rick Kessler-MDE
Andrew Roelke-MDE	Jennifer Martin-Public	Riley Roshong-GHHI
Ardenia Holland-MDE	Jennifer Thompkins-The Verlyn Group	Sam McGranahan-Del. Rosenberg
Ari Goldstein-MDH	Katherine Rush-MDE	Samantha
Ashley Ray-MDE	Katherine Taylor-BC-DHCD	Jacobs-Cribbs-HCHD
Attilah Edges-BCHD	Kevin Stanley-MDE	Shadia Musa-GHHI
Bay Hanson-GHHI	Leslie Delcid-MDE	Sheneka Frasier-MDE
Brionna Adams-GHHI	Malik Gupta-Del. Rosenberg	Stephanie Cobb-Williams-MDE
Brooke Paluzzi-BC-DHCD	Marjorie D'Ambrosio-MDE	Thelonious Williams-MDH
Carlie Furtaw-GHHI	Matthew Koning-MDE	Tim Rule-MDE
Chris White-ARC	Nancy Servatius-MDH	Wade McCord-MDE
David Griffin-MDE	Neil Roseman-Public	Wendy Phillips-MDE
Dawn Joy-AMA	Nekia Randall-BC-DHCD	William Doyle-HCHD

Documents Distributed:

- February 2026 Agenda

Welcome and Introductions:

Ruth Ann Norton, President of the Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) and Commission Chair opened the meeting and conducted introductions.

Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the previous meeting were presented for approval and adopted following a motion and second. The minutes were approved by the Commission.

Old & New Business:

- **Legislative Update on Performance Bonds and Insurance (SB 203 and HB 252):** Adam Skolnik, Executive Director for the Maryland Multi-Housing Association, Inc. (MMHA) and Commissioner, initiated the legislative discussion by referencing the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Departmental bill, SB 203 and HB 252, concerning performance bonds and liability insurance, expressing concern that standard liability policies would exclude fraud. Frederick Banks, Program Manager for MDE's Lead Poisoning Prevention Program (LPPP) and Commissioner clarified that the bill grants MDE the authority to require such provisions, allowing for options like performance bonds or Errors and Omissions (E&O) insurance, and that they are consulting with the Maryland Insurance Authority (MIA) and the Maryland Home Inspector Commission. Chair Norton strongly encouraged any opposition to testify at the hearing for transparency, emphasizing the bill's necessity to protect tenants, homeowners, and property owners from inspectors who may be liable but unable to pay judgments.
- **Discussion on Bond Availability for Inspectors:** Commissioner Skolnik questioned the practicality of the bill, noting that if no insurance or bonding company will write policies for inspectors in this limited scope, the law would be impossible to follow, potentially hindering inspectors from working. Susan Kleinhammer, President of Leadtec Services, Inc. (LSI) and Commissioner supported Commissioner Skolnik's concern, emphasizing the need to investigate the availability and other variables related to bonding before enacting the law, though they agreed on the goal of ensuring people can collect on civil penalties.
- **Stakeholder Feedback on SB 203 and HB 252:** Patrick Connor, President of Connor Environmental Consulting Services expressed that the topic is more complex than currently discussed, confirming that professional liability insurance would not cover fraud. He also raised the challenge of contract law, where inspectors contract with property owners or management companies, not occupants, and doubted whether smaller inspectors could qualify for a bond. Chair Norton, asserted the need for a system equivalent to Maryland Home Improvement Commission (MHIC) licensing, which requires a bond for contractors, to protect both property owners and residents by setting a high bar for environmental health inspections.
- **Proposal for a State-Sponsored Fund for Lead Inspectors:** Mr. Connor proposed considering a state-sponsored system where inspectors pay into a fund, arguing this could better ensure protection for the occupant and property owner, rather than relying solely on the insurance industry. Commissioner Skolnik called this idea "simplistic genius," noting that the Real Estate Commission already uses a similar model with a fund realtors pay into, suggesting MDE could oversee such a fund. Commissioner Norton agreed with the state-sponsored fund concept, acknowledging it might require seed money and a ramp-up period. Commissioner Kleinhammer also supported the idea but noted that inspectors would likely pass the cost onto the inspection fee, increasing the overall cost of inspections.
- **Updates on Lead Ammunition and Baby Food Legislation:** Commissioner Banks provided a brief update on Senate Bill 181 regarding lead ammunition, noting that there was a previous discussion and

MDE supplied neutral comments. Riley Roshong, Family Advocate Attorney for GHHI testified in favor of Senate Bill 181, which would phase out leaded ammunition where no commercially viable alternative exists, addressing opposition arguments about alternatives and academic literature regarding health risks. Michael Ichniowski, Pediatric Environmental Health advocate for the Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics (MDAAP) and Commissioner reported that House Bill 196, which aims to expand heavy metal testing of baby foods to include infant cereals and formula, has been introduced, and the academy chapter supports this bill.

- **Delegate Rosenberg's Bills for Lead Poisoning Reduction:** Ms. Roshong discussed two pending bills requested by Delegate Rosenberg. One bill would modify the requirements for a landlord to comply with a notice of EBL level by removing the requirement for an independent inspection, returning to the pre-2019 standard while keeping the Elevated Blood Lead (EBL) level risk level at 3.5 micrograms per deciliter, aiming to prevent delays in care for high lead level cases. The second bill seeks to include single-tenant occupancies under the lead poisoning reduction subtitle to cover tenants who rent rooms but share access to amenities like bathrooms and kitchens, addressing current gaps in coverage while including language to ease MDE regulation by focusing on areas with shared access. Sam McGranahan, Delegate Rosenberg's chief of staff, confirmed that the bills were submitted to DLS, and are awaiting return.
- **Concerns with Expedited Wrongful Detainer Proceedings:** Ms. Roshong also flagged House Bill 59, relating to expedited wrongful detainer proceedings for properties listed for sale or lease. She noted concern that landlords have filed such cases against lawful tenants attempting to force them to address lead issues, potentially manipulating the law to circumvent the lead statute requirements.
- **Lead and Copper Rule Update and Environmental Grants** Ms. Roshong reported that an amicus brief would be submitted by mid-March focusing on the disproportionate impact of lead on marginalized communities and the feasibility of meeting the established deadlines by citing examples from cities that have made substantial progress. Chair Norton also shared news about the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) environmental education grants, up to \$250,000, available for lead education and related environmental issues, and she will circulate the link.
- **Update on Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids Program and Grant Coordination** Dr. Clifford Mitchell, Bureau Director for the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and Commissioner gave an update on the Healthy Homes for Healthy Kids program, noting active outreach and discussing the challenge of coordinating messaging between similar, overlapping, but non-identical loan programs in state (DHC), Baltimore City, Baltimore County, and Cambridge, all of which have separate performance goals. Commissioner Dr. Mitchell also flagged a large multi-million dollar federal grant for rural transformation of health care, which will bring a significant focus on addressing the complexity of this program in rural communities.
- **Baltimore City's Lead Grant Program Success:** Katherine Taylor, Director of the Baltimore City Department of Housing and Community Development (BC-DHCD) Lead Hazard Reduction Program provided an update on their Housing and Urban Development (HUD) grant program, noting they have exceeded most of their goals and anticipate a new award of \$4.1 million, which would bring the city's total federal funding opportunity to \$9 million. Ms. Taylor indicated that their greatest challenge is contractor capacity, which they are addressing through outreach campaigns.
- **Lead Program Marketing and Information Sharing** Nicola Tran, Director of Housing and Building Energy Programs for the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and Commissioner shared that their department is developing a general lead marketing campaign for their three lead programs, aiming for a unified message and application process. Chair Norton suggested the need for a common dashboard of available resources and recommended convening communications

officers from all programs to coordinate marketing efforts. Commissioner Tran, Ms. Taylor, Thelonious Williams, Healthy Homes Program Administrator for MDH, A.C. Alrey - City of Cambridge, and Adonna Patterson from MDH, volunteered to participate in a strategy subgroup for rural communities and marketing.

- **Geographic Analysis of Lead Issues:** Commissioner Dr. Mitchell proposed a conversation between DHCD, MDE, MDH to use lead testing data and the lead registry to map opportunities, especially in underserved rural communities. Commissioner Dr. Mitchell confirmed that the mapping data is already publicly available on the Department of Health's Environmental Public Health Tracking portal, with census tract level data on children with elevated blood lead levels.
- **Budget Update and Public Meeting Location:** Commissioner Banks reported two approved fee increases: one for lead-free certificate fees and another for lead rental registration fees. He also mentioned that the water administration was approved for federal funding for lead replacement lines. Chair Norton sought input on holding a public meeting in June outside of the usual conference room, with potential suggestions including the Eastern Shore (Cambridge) and Western Maryland (Cumberland or Hagerstown), based on higher rates of elevated blood lead levels.
- **Formation of Housing Subcommittee and MDE Legal Update:** Commissioner Kleinhammer successfully proposed a motion to establish a subcommittee for housing concerns, based on the strategic plan. Commissioner Banks provided an update on the sentencing hearing for Green Environmental, noting the judge agreed to 5 years of suspended probation. Commissioner Tran announced an open program manager position for their HUD program, encouraging referrals. Mr. Connor asked if the Baltimore City Health Department had provided redacted environmental investigations for commission review, and Commissioner Banks agreed to follow up on this request.
- **Addressing Non-Responsive Property Owners and Title Notification** Mr. Connor raised a question about mechanisms for the department to address property owners who fail to respond within 30 days to bring their property into compliance following inspection certificate invalidation, specifically suggesting the possibility of tagging a title or deed. Commissioner Banks confirmed that the state is currently not taking advantage of the opportunity to tag a lien but noted that they are working with ESTA to receive updates on changes in ownership, which are currently not being adequately reported by property owners. Commissioner Norton emphasized that slowing title clearance would be a significant incentive for compliance and requested that the state provide reasons at the next meeting as to why this action is not occurring.
- **Collaboration with EPA on Lead Disclosure Enforcement** Mr. Connor inquired if the department is collaborating with the EPA for referrals to enforce Section 1018 of the real estate disclosure act, concerning invalidated lead-free certificates and the potential voiding of required federal real estate disclosures due to owners utilizing the Maryland 330 form exemption. Chair Norton acknowledged that this is a "quite a smart idea" given recent EPA enforcement actions and proposed convening with both EPA and HUD regarding this matter as a potential plan of action.
- **Status of the Annual Report to the Governor:** Commissioner Kleinhammer inquired about the status of the annual report to the governor, which is typically due at the beginning of the year. Commissioner Banks clarified that the report is currently pending approval in the secretary's office.

Adjournment:

The Commission meeting adjourned at 11:30 am.