

March 6, 2024

TO: Joint Committee Report

FROM: Janet Abrahams, HABC President & CEO

RE: Air Conditioning in Residential Rental Units: The committees requested that HABC provide a report identifying the number of units owned or operated by HABC that have air conditioning and the number that do not.

The Housing Authority of Baltimore City (HABC) is the country's 5th largest public housing authority and Baltimore City's largest provider of affordable housing opportunities. HABC serves nearly 44,000 of Baltimore City's low-income individuals through its Public Housing and Housing Choice Voucher programs. HABC's public housing inventory currently consists of approximately 7,000 units located at various developments, as well as privately managed and scattered sites throughout the city. HABC is federally funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and is subject to federal regulation that pertain to the operation of its housing programs.

HABC's Capital Funding is appropriated annually by Congress and is subject to change, and is sometimes reduced significantly, each year. Our public housing sites have an average age of 80 years and immediate capital needs estimated at approximately \$120 million. In addition, the aging electrical infrastructure at some of our sites would need a complete overhaul to support the installation of centralized air conditioning. In general, non-emergency electrical and heating system replacements are identified years in advance and built into HABC's annual Capital budget as well as its annual Moving to Work (MTW) plan.

Further, HUD has specific requirements about how public housing units are to be maintained, and all public housing authorities must comply with these requirements. HUD regulations do not require that HABC provide or install air conditioning for residents. HUD requires a "reasonable accommodation" for air conditioning usage if the resident demonstrates a need." This accommodation would be reflected in the electric utility allowance provided to the resident and would be above and beyond what a resident receives for a baseline utility allowance.

HABC's public housing residents can purchase and install window air conditioner units within their dwelling units when central air conditioning does not exist. The window where the air conditioner is to be installed must not be used for an emergency exit. If an air conditioning unit is installed in a residence with only one emergency exit, it would be considered a blocked egress, violating HUD regulations. This would result in a finding on HABC's annual HUD inspections, potentially impacting HABC's funding and our ability to provide housing for the massive number of people who seek housing opportunities within the HABC portfolio.

Public Housing Inventory Central Air Conditioning Status

*Residents can purchase and install window air conditioner units within their dwelling units when central air conditioning does not exist

| Development | Year Built | Unit Count | Central AC | No Central AC |
|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|---------------|
| Brooklyn Homes | 1942 | 482 | | X |
| Cherry Hill | 1946 | 1,281 | | X |
| Cherry Hill (17) | 1946 | 157 | X | |
| Douglass Homes | 1942 | 387 | | X |
| Gilmor Homes | 1942 | 416 | | X |
| Latrobe Homes | 1942 | 669 | | X |
| McCulloh Homes | 1940 | 556 | | X |
| O'Donnell Heights | 1942 | 230 | | X |
| Poe Homes | 1941 | 288 | | X |
| Westport Homes | 1942 | 200 | | X |
| Mount Winans | 1970 | 52 | | X |

Private Portfolio/Scattered Sites

*Residents can purchase and install window air conditioner units within their dwelling units when central air conditioning does not exist

| Development | Year Built | Total # of units | Central AC | No Central AC |
|---|-----------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| Baltimore Affordable Housing Development | | | | |
| Albemarle | 2004 | 130 | X | |
| Arbor Oaks | 1950 | 62 | X | |
| Sharp Leadenhall | Scattered Units | 23 | X | |
| Townes at the Terraces | 1998 | 202 | X | |
| HABC-OWNED | | | | |
| CHM | 1918-1940 | 14 | X | |
| Montpeliers Choice | 1952 | 13 | X | |
| Barrister Court | 1931 | 32 | X | |
| Indecco | 1902 | 45 | X | |
| Irvington | 1993 | 41 | X | |
| Norman Lohn House | 1991 | 12 | X | |
| Somerset Chase | 1983 | 22 | X | |
| West Lexington | 1970's | 44 | | X |