

Maryland Fire Marshals Committee

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February 23, 2020

Delegate Kumar P. Barve, Chairman
Delegate Dana Stein, Vice Chair
Environment and Transportation Committee
Maryland General Assembly
Room 251
House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB0823 Public Safety – State Fire Marshal – Sprinkler Systems Enforcement

Dear Delegate Barve and Delegate Stein,

The Maryland Metro Chiefs Fire Marshal Committee is made up of representatives from fire marshal offices from across the State. We work in collaboration with the Office of the Maryland State Fire Marshal to advocate for strong and effective fire prevention and life safety measures to protect the citizens of the State of Maryland.

We are writing you today to offer our emphatic support for HB0823 Public Safety – State Fire Marshal – Sprinkler Systems Enforcement. We believe the proposed legislation is needed to ensure that residential fire sprinklers, which have saved numerous lives in the State of Maryland, are installed in every new residential dwelling constructed in the State without exception.

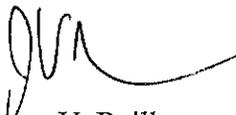
Residential fire sprinklers can be installed at a modest cost and have been proven effective. During a recent 7 year period in Prince George's County, there were more than 200 fires in homes protected by residential fire sprinklers. There were 466 people present when these fires occurred. None of them perished. During this same period in the county, 53 people died in residential fires where the residence was not protected by a fire sprinkler system.

Fires in modern dwellings grow quickly. It takes time for the fire department to respond and apply water to a fire. Residential fire sprinklers provide a proven early intervention that allows residents to escape a fire.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal must have the authority to enforce the residential fire sprinkler requirement across the State. The safety and protection intended by Maryland State Law regarding fire sprinklers should extend to all residents without amendment or exemption.

We concur with the testimony offered by the Maryland State Fire Marshal and strongly endorse this legislation. Thank you for your consideration and we respectfully ask the Environment and Transportation Committee for a favorable report for HB0823.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JVR', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

James V. Reilly
Chairman
Metro Chiefs Fire Marshal Committee

JVR/jvr