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**HB 1295 – RENTAL APARTMENTS AIR-CONDITIONING REQUIREMENTS**  
**Environment and Transportation Committee**  
**FAVORABLE**  
**March 5, 2024**

Good afternoon Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and members of the Committee. My name is Priscilla Kania, AARP volunteer lead advocate and resident of Anne Arundel County. AARP Maryland advocates for over two million Marylanders age 50 and over. We thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of HB 1295 Rental Apartments Air – Conditioning Requirements. And we thank Delegate Lehman for sponsoring this bill.

HB 1295 would require landlords to provide air-conditioning to residential rental units in apartment buildings.

When the temperature climbs above 80°F, older adults need to be proactive and take precautions to avoid ailments due to excessive heat. This is because if you are older, you don't adjust to quick changes in the temperature as well as younger people do. Similarly, older people are more likely to have a chronic condition or take a medication that may affect their body's ability to control temperature, according to WebMD.

According to the National Institute of Health, hotter days can cause difficulty in the body's ability to regulate its temperature. This can be challenging for older adults who typically do not adjust as well as others to sudden temperature changes and are more likely to develop serious health conditions. Additionally, older adults are more likely to have chronic medical conditions that affect the body's response to temperature, and to take prescription medicines that alter the body's ability to control temperature or sweat.

Older adults are at higher risk for heat-related illnesses such as heat syncope, heat cramps, heat exhaustion, heat edema, heat rash and heat stroke and death. Factors that put older adults at greater risk may include:

- Health problems such as cardiovascular, lung, or kidney disease;
- Changes in skin caused by normal aging;
- Any illness that causes weakness or results in a fever;
- Taking drugs such as diuretics, sedatives, tranquilizers, and some heart and high blood pressure medicines that may make it harder for the body to cool itself;
- Being on several prescription drugs at the same time; and

- Having obesity, overweight, or underweight;
- Drinking alcoholic beverages;
- Living in places without air conditioning; and
- Becoming dehydrated.

According to AARP, It's not just heat stroke you must worry about on extremely warm days. Experts say high heat can increase your risk for an *actual* stroke, as well as a heart attack and other cardiovascular issues. In fact, research suggests the number of deaths from cardiovascular disease (conditions affecting the heart or blood vessels) may double or triple when heat reaches extreme temperatures.

A big reason: The heart must work harder when it's hot out, says Arash Harzand, M.D., a cardiologist and assistant professor of medicine at Emory University. It must pump more blood as the body works to cool itself down. (When you're hot, the blood in your body gets routed away from the internal organs to just under the skin, where it releases heat — much like a radiator.) The body also demands more oxygen when it gets overheated, and it's the heart's job to deliver it.

In the U.S., an average of 702 heat-related deaths occur each year, federal data shows. Patricia Best, M.D., an interventional cardiologist and associate professor of internal medicine and cardiovascular diseases at Mayo Clinic, estimates that at least a quarter of these deaths can be attributed to cardiovascular disease.

A study published July 24 in the journal *Circulation* found that the risk of a fatal heart attack among older adults in Jiangsu province, China, was 18 percent higher during two-day heat waves with heat indexes at or above the 90th percentile (ranging from 82.6 to 97.9 degrees Fahrenheit). Risks were 74 percent higher during four-day heat waves with heat indexes at or above the 97.5th percentile (ranging from 94.8 to 109.4 degrees Fahrenheit).

Placing air-conditioning units in apartments is the right thing to do to protect the health and minimize the need for unnecessary medical expenses or death of our older Marylanders.

AARP Maryland is committed to collaborating with you to effectively address Maryland's rental concerns for older adults. We ask the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1295.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Tammy Bresnahan at [tbresnahan@aarp.org](mailto:tbresnahan@aarp.org) or by calling 410-302-8451. Thank you.