



House Bill 153

Committee: Economic Matters

Bill: House Bill 153 - Residential Rental Apartments - Air-Conditioning Requirement

Date: February 5th, 2026

Position: Informational

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members house more than 538,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA's membership consists of owners and managers of more than 210,000 rental housing homes in over 958 apartment communities and more than 250 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

House Bill 153 ("HB 153") requires a landlord to provide air-conditioning to residential rental units in apartment buildings with four or more individual dwelling units in a certain manner beginning June 1, 2026, for newly constructed residential rental units and beginning October 1, 2026, for residential rental units that undergo renovation that includes the replacement or substantial upgrade of electrical systems or heating systems.

In response to the air-conditioning related legislation that has been introduced at the state and local levels, MMHA conducted an internal survey with association membership in the Interim to gain a better understanding of the current practice of providing air-conditioning to residents. **Out of MMHA members that represented over 128,000 units statewide (About 60% of units in our membership), only 600 units had no central air-conditioning and did not offer window air-conditioning units to residents upon request (0.47% of units from the sample).**

As introduced, HB 153 mirrors closely the legislative language of House Bill 339 at the close of the 2025 Maryland Legislative Session. It was determined that with the prospective nature of the legislation and the flexibility built into it, thanks in part to the good faith efforts made with the house sponsor on various amendments, MMHA would no longer oppose the legislation at the end of the 2025 Legislative Session. For those reasons mentioned above, as well as the results of our internal membership survey during the Interim, MMHA will not oppose HB 153 as introduced.

If HB 153 passes, we would ask the Administration for reasonableness, and to give deference to housing providers with the interpretation of the law. Specifically, the threshold for what should be considered a "...SUBSTANTIAL UPGRADE OF ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS OR HEATING SYSTEMS" as described in 8-122(B)(2) should be a significant standard to attain. It is worth noting that for those housing providers that will make additional renovations as a result of the passage of this legislation, rents will increase on tenants at a time when the State has a dearth of affordable housing.

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