



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

House Bill 220 – Environment – Water – Individual Unit Meters
House Environment and Transportation Committee
February 4, 2026
SUPPORT

The City of Takoma Park supports SB130, which concerns tenant charges for water in multifamily buildings of three or more units. The bill requires new tenant protections for situations where a building owner or manager chooses to install individual meters and charge tenants for water use.

This bill limits tenant charges to costs charged by the water provider plus a nominal service fee of up to \$1, requires those charges to be based on per unit water use, and disallows charges for common areas or leaks the owner is responsible for. It also requires that landlords maintain and allow tenants access to records tenants would need to verify the amount of their water use and charge. Landlords cannot treat unpaid water bills as unpaid rent when considering evictions. And, the bill provides options for a complaint process for tenants about these provisions.

About half of the City of Takoma Park's nearly 18,000 residents are renters, mostly in buildings with three or more units. We have seen injustices that this bill looks to resolve, including unpaid water bills influencing eviction decisions, landlords overcharging tenants for water, and difficulties accessing records. At this time, the only tools the City has to address these unfair practices are the city housing code and our City Commission on Landlord-Tenant Affairs that hears complaints under the city's housing code and would also hear complaints under this law if passed.

This bill is a welcome addition to tenant protections in our community, and more importantly it extends these protections to tenants statewide. This bill will help us meet our city priority housing goals of ensuring safe, high quality and affordable housing throughout our community, as well as our City's equity goals and priorities. In sum, the City of Takoma Park supports this bill, and encourages a favorable Committee vote.

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