



**MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND**

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 4, 2026

TO: The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: House Bill 220, *Environment - Water - Individual Unit Meters*
Support

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4. Today, I am speaking on behalf of myself in support of House Bill 220, *Environment - Water - Individual Unit Meters*.

This bill authorizes a landlord who owns a building served by a master water meter that measures consumption for the whole building to install individual water meters for each dwelling unit and imposes requirements to ensure that tenants are treated fairly. The bill includes provisions that: (1) require a landlord to allocate water usage charges in proportion to actual water usage by each unit; (2) prohibit a landlord from passing on to tenants the costs associated with poor maintenance or leaks or common area usage; (3) prohibit a landlord from charging more than \$1 per unit per month to cover the administrative costs of billing; (4) require that each individual water meter include a leak detection monitor; (5) require landlords to maintain adequate records for individual meters that may be inspected by tenants; (6) prohibit the inclusion of unpaid water bills in the calculation of “unpaid rent” in an eviction proceeding; and (7) outline a process for filing complaints for violation of the bill.

The Honorable Marc Korman

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This bill came about after hearing from residents of The Grand, an apartment complex with over 500 units in my district, as well as residents in other buildings. Residents shared experiences of malfunctioning water meters, retroactive billing based on estimated usage, and service fees that in some cases matched or exceeded monthly water charges. Given these concerning claims, my office brought in the Montgomery County Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) to conduct an investigation. OCP found several gaps in existing law which allowed this situation to occur. We know this issue is not just happening at The Grand, but with over 500 units they were best placed to speak up and to bring in OCP to do an investigation and provide recommendations on how to avoid these situations in the future.

At this naturally occurring affordable housing property, tenants were taken advantage of and made to pay potentially large amounts of money for a limited and sometimes faulty level of service. I want to thank Delegate Lorig Charkoudian for drafting and bringing this bill forward in the House and Senator Shaneka Henson for cross-filing it in the Senate.

This legislation is needed to protect others from dealing with the same issues. It will ensure the installation of individual water meters is monitored and properly regulated. I urge you to support this bill to ensure greater protections for tenants throughout Maryland regarding access to water and cost of water usage.