



Bill No: HB 451-- Real Property – Residential Rental Property Inspection – Remote Video Inspection

Committee: Environment & Transportation

Date: 2/2/2021

Position: Favorable

The Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington (AOBA) represents members that own or manage more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 133,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

This bill would require local jurisdictions to adopt local provisions for remote video inspection of residential rental property during a protracted state of emergency declared by the Governor and in response to a complaint by a tenant of a dangerous or hazardous condition during a severe weather event or state of emergency declared by the Governor that prevents an in-person inspection. The video inspection must be directed by a licensed home inspector or similar professional.

AOBA supports HB 451 because it will allow for safer and more efficient inspections; particularly during times when in-person inspections are infeasible or impractical. During the COVID-19 pandemic many housing providers have had trouble renewing rental licenses because the renewal required a housing inspection and government agencies had suspended in-person inspections. While AOBA members paid for a license renewal and submitted all the required paperwork on time, they were forced to operate under an old rental license because an in-person inspection was infeasible. This bill fixes that issue for the industry while also providing residents recourse if they have a complaint of dangerous or hazardous housing condition during a time when an inspection would otherwise be inadvisable or impractical.

We have spoken to Del. Henson; AOBA also supports the amendment to require that an on-site inspection must occur, within a reasonable time, before a fine or penalty is issued against a housing provider.

For these reasons AOBA requests a favorable as amended report on HB 451.

For further information contact Erin Bradley, AOBA Vice President of Government Affairs, at 301-904-0814 or ebradley@aoba-metro.org.