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Montgomery County

Health and Government Operations
Committee

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Sponsor Testimony on House Bill 918 Broadband Equity

HB918 is intended to benefit Montgomery County renters by ensuring equitable access to multiple wired broadband providers.

Most Montgomery County residents who live in single family homes or townhomes are fortunate to have access to two or even three wired broadband providers. This healthy competition between providers results in better service and better prices. But tens of thousands of apartment dwellers cannot shop for wired broadband because their landlord has cut a deal with a single provider.

HB198 addresses this problem by guaranteeing tenants a right to access to all franchisees (who are also broadband providers). It is modeled after legislation that has been on the books in the District of Columbia for over 20 years. Other jurisdictions that have addressed this issue include Anne Arundel County, San Francisco, Oakland and New York.

The advantage of enacting this policy in state law instead of County law is that only a state law would cover the entire County, including municipalities. The Montgomery County Delegation voted unanimously in favor.

The issue of broadband equity was highlighted in [President Biden's July 9, 2021 executive order](#). It was also the subject of a [Wired Magazine](#) article.

The [FCC recently ruled on this issue](#), cracking down on anti-competitive landlord practices. HB918 is still needed because the FCC order could be overturned in court or reversed in the future after a change in administration.

I ask for your favorable report.

City of Rockville Apartment Buildings Lacking Broadband Competition

License #	Street Address	Complex Name	# of Units
APT94-00007	261 Congressional Lane	Congressional Tower Apartments	610
APT94-00024	1599 E Jefferson Street	Rollins Park Apartments	539
APT2019-00070	20 Maryland Avenue	Fenestra Apartments	492
APT94-00028	1001 Rockville Pike	Woodmont Park Apartments	414
APT2018-00069	1900 Chapman Avenue	The Escher Apartments	317
APT2009-00043	105 King Farm Blvd	Residences at King Farm Apartments	285
APT2022-00075	30 Upper Rock Circle	Gables Upper Rock Apartments II	276
APT2018-00066	255 N Washington Street	The Metropolitan at RTC	275
APT2022-00074	70 Upper Rock Circle	Mira Upper Rock Apartments I	275
APT2006-00018	719 Falls Grove Blvd	Camden Falls Grove Apartments	268
APT94-00005	199 Rollins Avenue	Bethany House Apartments	250
APT94-00015	1801 E Jefferson Street	Ring House Apartments	250
APT2021-00073	12503 Ardennes Avenue	Kanso Twinbrook Apartments	238
APT2013-00052	735 Monroe Street Suite 201	Fireside Park Apartments	236
APT2017-00065	1380 Piccard Drive	Flats at Shady Grove	203
APT2004-00011	1620 E Jefferson Street	The Crest at Congressional Apartments	146
APT2017-00062	438 College Parkway	Scarborough Square Apartments	121
APT2018-00067	285 N Washington Street	Brightview Rockville Town Center	116
APT94-00013	95 Dawson Avenue	Heritage House Apartments	100
APT2007-00036	130 Rollins Avenue	Rollins Ridge Apartments	99
APT94-00025	1301 First Street	David Scull Apartments	76
APT2021-00072	50 Monroe Place	Main Street Apartments	70
APT94-00014	247 N Van Buren Street	Heritage Park Apartments	65
APT2013-00051	38 Maryland Avenue 313	The Palladian Apartments	65
APT2011-00047	703 Lenmore Avenue F3	Rocklin Park Apartments	59
APT2016-00061	1628 E Jefferson Street	The Stories Apartments	48
APT94-00022	500 Mt Vernon Place	Park Terrace Apartments	45