



CITY OF TAKOMA PARK, MARYLAND

**SB 970
Support**

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

SB 970 Fire Protection and Prevention - Sprinkler Systems and Smoke Alarms – Requirements

Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act

March 16, 2023

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of Senate Bill 970.

Earlier this year, a tragic apartment fire in Downtown Silver Spring took the life of 25-year-old Melanie Diaz and her two dogs, displaced over 400 residents, and hospitalized 20 people, including firefighters. Almost 90 apartments in the building were condemned.

There are dozens of high-rise buildings in Montgomery County, including in Takoma Park. This legislation would provide necessary fire safety improvements in high-rise apartment buildings by:

- Requiring the installation of an automatic smoke alarm in each public corridor accessible by units in high-rise buildings beginning on July 1, 2023.
- Codifying into law that beginning January 1, 2033, each high-rise building regardless of construction date, shall be protected by a complete automatic sprinkler system.
- Prohibiting landlords from charging deaf or hard of hearing tenants for necessary accessible alarm systems; and from charging tenants for smoke alarm reimbursements.
- Requiring buildings to post a notice in all main building entrances and note in the lease if they do not have automatic sprinkler systems in place.
- Instructing the Department of Housing and Community Development to work with the State Fire Marshal and Maryland Department of Emergency Management to identify funding sources to help building owners meet these requirements.

This bill is important to Takoma Park because the City has experienced first-hand how traumatizing a fire in a multifamily family building can be. Residents expect to feel safe in their homes and assume that proper steps are taken to protect them. This bill takes a common sense approach to protecting lives.

The City of Takoma Park supports SB 970, and encourages a favorable vote.