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FIRE PREVENTION COMMISSION

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Colonel Roland L. Butler, Jr.
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Subject: SB 0970 Fire Protection and Prevention Testimony

My name is Edward Tochtermann, I am Chairman of the Maryland State Fire Prevention Commission and am testifying today on behalf of the entire Commission which totally supports the passage of SB 0970.

The fatal high-rise fire which occurred on February 18, 2023 in Montgomery County took the life of a young woman, displaced scores of building occupants and caused over a million dollars in damage. This same building also suffered a multi-alarm fire approximately 44 years ago.

SB 0970 gives high-rise building owners until January 1, 2033 to retrofit their buildings with automatic fire sprinklers. That date is comparable with the National Fire Protection Association Standard #101 "Life Safety Code" which our Commission and the Maryland State Fire Marshal's Office have been working to adopt.

SB 0970 also includes Baltimore City which is very important to protect the many citizens living in unsprinkler protected buildings which were built before July 1, 1974 when the current high rise sprinkler law became effective.

Thank you for your attention and should you have any questions I will do my best to answer them.

Very truly yours,

Edward S. Tochtermann, Jr.
Chairman