

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



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Education, Energy, and the Environment
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Greetings from the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA). As President of the MSFA, I am pleased to be here to offer my written testimony in support of Senate Bill 0970; Fire Protection and Prevention - Sprinkler Systems and Smoke Alarms - Requirements (Melanie Diaz Sprinklers Save Lives Act).

"In 2019, the State Fire Marshal's Office determined that residential high-rise buildings that are not protected throughout by an automatic sprinkler system are a distinct hazard to life and property." This is not only an issue for residents of these buildings, but to the many fire and rescue personnel that are called to extinguish the fire.

By not having an automatic sprinkler system in place, the unprotected building increases numerous risks of uncontrolled combustion and lessens the ability for residents to remove themselves in a timely fashion. In the past, the time it took to escape a fire was far longer than today. One to two minutes is not nearly long enough to safely escape a burning residence after the smoke alarm signals. Automatic sprinkler systems increase an occupant's survival ten-fold.

For the safety of Maryland high rise residents as well as responding fire and rescue personnel, I ask for your favorable report on SB 0970.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin W. Kurtz
President, Maryland State Firemen's Association