



Bill No: HB 1179— Housing and Community Development - Pets in Housing Developments

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: 3/5/2024

Position: Unfavorable

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.

House Bill 1179 would prohibit an owner or agent of an owner of a housing development that on or after January 1, 2025, who receives a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) from the Department of Housing and Community Development from imposing prohibitions and costs related to a resident's possession of pets.

AOBA members are concerned about limiting the pet fee for communities that qualify for the LIHTC program. Pet fees are one tool for housing providers to collect expenses for a pet's wear and tear on the property. These fees do not adequately cover the costs of housing residents with pets. At best, the fees may cover damage to the unit. At worst, the fees do not cover the costs of maintenance of common areas. For example, landscape areas are frequently used for dog walking, common area carpets or walls are stained or damaged, and flea or tick infestations. All residents should not bear these costs but should instead be the residents' responsibility with pets. According to the Human Animal Bond Research Institute (HABRI), "72% of residents report that pet-friendly housing is hard to find." Eliminating pet fees will result in more restrictions on pets, making pet-friendly housing even more scarce.

For these reasons, AOBA requests an unfavorable report on HB 1179. For further information contact Ryan Washington, AOBA Manager of Government Affairs, at 202-770-7713 or rwashington@aoba-metro.org .