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Environment and Transportation  
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The Maryland House of Delegates



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**HB 339**

**REAL PROPERTY – RESIDENTIAL RENTAL APARTMENTS – AIR CONDITIONING  
REQUIREMENTS**

**SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

**Mr. Chair, Madam Vice Chair and Esteemed Environment and Transportation Committee colleagues, I am requesting favorable consideration of HB 339 establishing air conditioning requirements in new residential rental units in apartment buildings and in *renovated* residential rental units in apartment buildings.**

**I introduced similar legislation in 2024 that was based on Pr. George's and Montgomery County laws that required landlords to turn on air conditioning in apartment buildings with centralized cooling systems between June 1 and Sept. 30. That legislation was heard but never voted on by this committee.**

**A New, More Scientific Approach**

**The 2025 bill takes a completely different and more scientific approach to achieve the same goal: air conditioning in new apartment building construction and in**

renovated apartment buildings. The cooling provisions and definition of building alteration are based on standards published every three to seven years by the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE), an international society of professionals founded in 1894. Its standards are widely respected and adopted by governments around the world, including in the United States.

**Need for the Legislation:** Climate change is causing earth's average temperature to rise and leading to hotter days with less relief even after sun set.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the 10 hottest years in the historical record all occurred in the last decade; the hottest year on record was 2023. Death Valley, California recorded a searing high of 128 degrees Fahrenheit in July 2023. Here at home, according to the Maryland Climate Bulletin, for 2023, there were approximately 45 days in Maryland in which the temperature reached between 90 and 100 degrees. Last summer, Baltimore Washington International Airport recorded four consecutive days at or above 100 degrees between July 13<sup>th</sup> and July 16<sup>th</sup>. It has simply become too hot for Maryland residents to live without air conditioning.

### **What the Legislation Does**

The bill does three basic things:

- First, it requires air conditioning in newly constructed apartment buildings beginning June 1, 2025. Starting Oct. 1, 2025, residential apartment buildings that undergo alterations must also install either centralized cooling systems or

window air conditioning units. **NOTE: The bill does not apply to new building construction or renovations for which the building permit was issued before the June 1, 2025, effective date of the bill.**

- It uses ASHRAE Standard 55's thermal comfort calculation to determine when a landlord must provide air conditioning and at what temperature.
- It uses ASHRAE's definition of "alteration" to mean replacing or upgrading heating, ventilation, air conditioning or electrical systems and related equipment, plus other building alterations.

### **Amendments**

I am proposing four amendments to the bill. They were submitted Jan. 31 and will soon be available in the floor system. They are:

1. the definition of alteration
2. a clarification of the meaning of an HVAC system to include electrical systems
3. elimination of the calendar dates during which air conditioning must be provided
4. a clarification of ASHRAE's comfort level thresholds

I have been working with ASHRAE to translate their high standards into a workable bill and am grateful for their assistance and cooperation. I also have been working with the MD Multifamily Housing Association and have incorporated several changes at its request.

Marylanders in rental apartments need relief from the hotter days we will continue experiencing. This carefully crafted bill will provide that. Thank you for your favorable consideration of HB 339.





