CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Support House Bill 149 - Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians
House Economic Matters Committee
February 19, 2026

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of this bill, which would enact some of the recommendations established by the Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High Rise Apartment Buildings as established by HB 823/CH 744 in 2024. That bill, which the City supported, was passed after a tragic apartment fire in Downtown Silver Spring in 2023 that 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.

The Workgroup's report recognizes that full retrofitting may not always be immediately feasible, but there are interim measures that can be implemented to mitigate risk. The bill requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and certification of its assistant and special assistant fire marshal designees. It also requires that residential rental high-rise buildings undergoing substantial renovation have fire sprinklers installed.

This bill is important to Takoma Park because half our residents are renters, and 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 House Bill 149 and encourages a favorable vote.

City Contact: Talisha Searcy, Mayor
talishas@takomaparkmd.gov