



**State of Maryland**  
**Department of State Police**  
Government Affairs Unit  
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

**POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION**

**DATE:** February 19, 2026

**BILL NUMBER:** House Bill 149      **POSITION:** Letter of Information

**BILL TITLE:** Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

**REVIEW AND ANALYSIS**

This legislation seeks to create uniform statewide qualifications for fire inspection personnel under the Maryland Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM). It also requires OSFM to designate or approve assistant state fire marshals for state and local governments and to standardize fire safety oversight through new regulations on training, certification, fire plan review, and inspections. OSFM current and future staff will be required to obtain NFPA certification to meet the new standards.

Under current law, a county or municipality may designate a fire marshal or fire official to serve as an assistant state fire marshal. The Assistant State Fire Marshal shall at least have completed training in NFPA 1031 standards or Fire Inspector I equivalent. Currently there are no uniform standards for appointment besides the designee being a full-time employee of the fire department.

House Bill 149 seeks to update the definition of a high-rise building to any building where an occupiable floor is more than 75 feet above the fire department vehicle access. This aligns Maryland law with modern fire safety standards. It also goes a step further, beginning October 1, 2026, by requiring residential high-rise buildings undergoing major renovations (40% of building value) to install automatic sprinklers and additional life-safety features.

The State Fire Prevention Commission is to develop regulations for the licensing of fire alarm companies and technicians. The OSFM is required to carry out and enforce those regulations. Specifically, the OSFM has to develop an online licensing application and payment system for fire alarm companies and technicians which will create significant fiscal and operational challenges. Current staff capacity is already maxed out, and the anticipated workload is substantial, with an estimated 400 companies applying and an average of three employees per company.

OSFM is currently developing a Records Management System (RMS). Modifying this system to accommodate fire alarm licensing will require costly change orders, with estimated one-time integration costs ranging from \$50,000 to \$100,000.

In addition, the bill requires OSFM staff to obtain NFPA certifications. No current employees fully meet this requirement. Certification will be required for 45 sworn members, 18 fire safety inspectors, and 8 fire protection engineers. Initial certification costs are estimated at \$8,982 for

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inspectors, \$499 per sworn member, and \$3,992 for engineers. Renewal costs will be \$225 every three years per employee.

The OSFM recognizes the importance of House Bill 149 and appreciates the effort to strengthen and establish uniform fire safety standards across the State of Maryland. However, the legislation would impose significant new financial and operational burdens on the OSFM without additional staffing or funding, and OSFM is unable to bear that burden at this time.

The Maryland Department of State Police urge the Committee to consider this letter while deliberating on House Bill 149.