



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

March 5, 2026

TO: The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama  
Chair, Economic Matters Committee

FROM: Marc Elrich  
County Executive

RE: House Bill 1221 - Public Safety - Short-Term Rental Units - Fire Safety (Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act)

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House Bill 1221 requires a short-term rental host to provide in a short-term rental unit: a conspicuously posted evacuation diagram identifying all exits from the unit; a conspicuously posted list of emergency telephone numbers for law enforcement and fire rescue services; a working fire extinguisher; and working smoke alarms. The bill contains provisions stipulating the number, location, and other aspects of the smoke alarms, and requires booking services used to find and reserve a short-term rental to notify all hosts who use the booking service of the fire safety requirements of the bill and require each host who uses the booking service to provide the service with confirmation documents of an annual fire safety inspection of the short-term rental unit. Finally, House Bill 1221 requires each county in the State to enact a local law by July 1, 2028, that requires the annual inspection of all short-term rental units in the county for compliance with the fire safety provisions of the bill and submit a report to the State Fire Marshall on information related to local inspections under the bill. A county may establish a fee to cover the cost of inspections required by the bill.

In 2022, two Montgomery County residents, Jillian and Lindsay Wiener, tragically died in a vacation rental unit in New York due to the hosts' negligence concerning fire safety measures, among other issues.<sup>1</sup> Maryland should take the reasonable steps enumerated by House Bill 1221 to prevent similar circumstances from claiming additional lives.

Montgomery County is one of a handful of counties in the State that requires a local license to operate a short-term rental, however, we estimate that the vast majority of short-term rentals in the County are not licensed despite our local law. By making annual county inspections mandatory and requiring the host to submit documentation of the county inspection to the booking service in order to utilize the booking service, counties would likely be made aware of, and able to enforce safety and code regulations in, many more short-term rentals than is currently possible.

Because House Bill 1221 would make short-term rentals safer and enable counties to inspect and enforce reasonable safety measures, I respectfully urge the committee to issue a favorable report.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.dcnnewsnow.com/news/local-news/maryland/montgomery-county/man-pleads-guilty-to-homicide-for-fire-that-killed-maryland-sisters-in-the-hampton/>