

The Jillian and Lindsay Wiener Short-Term Rental Fire Safety Act

Economic Matters Committee

Senator Feldman and Delegate Foley

Re: Request for Enforcement of Fire Safety Requirements for Short-Term Rental Properties

To the Honorable Court:

I respectfully submit this letter in support of requiring mandatory fire detection systems and municipal safety inspections for properties operating as short-term rentals through platforms such as Airbnb, VRBO, and others.

The growing number of short-term rental properties in our nation has created a category of lodging that functions similarly to hotels, yet often operates without equivalent safety oversight. Unlike traditional lodging establishments, which are routinely inspected and required to comply with strict fire safety codes, many short-term rental properties are not subject to consistent inspection protocols or verification of working fire detection systems.

This lack of oversight presents a serious public safety concern. Guests occupying these properties are frequently unfamiliar with the layout, exits, and potential hazards within the home. In the event of a fire, functioning smoke detectors, carbon monoxide detectors, clearly marked egress points, and compliance with local fire codes are critical to preventing injury or loss of life. Without mandatory inspections, there is no reliable mechanism to ensure that these safety measures are installed, operational, and maintained.

Requiring local fire department inspections and verified installation of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors would:

1. Protect the lives and safety of visitors and neighboring residents.
2. Ensure compliance with existing municipal and state fire codes.
3. Create parity between short-term rental properties and traditional lodging establishments.
4. Reduce liability risks for property owners and the municipality.

Public safety must remain paramount. As short-term rentals continue to operate as commercial enterprises within residential communities, it is reasonable and necessary that they meet minimum life-safety standards verified through municipal inspection.

For these reasons, I respectfully request that the Court support enforcement measures requiring documented fire detection systems and regular inspections by the appropriate town authorities for all properties operating as short-term rentals.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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