



Testimony of the Mayor and Council of Rockville SB 12 – Residential Rental Apartments – Air-Conditioning Requirement Support with Amendment

The Mayor and Council of Rockville are thankful to Chair Valderrama and members of the House Economic Matters Committee for the opportunity to provide written comments in support of SB 12. We thank Senator West for sponsoring this important legislation.

The Mayor and Council support this legislation, which aligns with our housing priority and efforts to update our Landlord/Tenant Code to improve living conditions for renters. SB 12 requires a landlord of residential units in apartment buildings with ten or more individual dwelling units to provide air conditioning from June 1 through September 30 each year. Landlords are to provide air conditioning in residential rental units beginning June 1, 2026, for newly constructed units and starting on October 1, 2026, for existing units that undergo renovation that includes the replacement or substantial upgrade of electrical systems or heating systems.

Enforcement is a key aspect that is necessary for SB 12 to have its intended impact. The City of Rockville suggests two clarifications that would strengthen the bill:

- Add clarity by defining what is meant by “newly constructed” by providing specifics, such as a date, when the property received a building permit, or certificate of occupancy.
- Add specificity to the definition of “substantial upgrade” by adding language that would include a threshold (per cent or dollar amount) and more specifics about the types of projects that would apply under the bill.

In Rockville, approximately 47% of our residents are renters. Ensuring that all of our renters have air conditioning is critically important to the health and safety of our residents. The impacts of climate change are causing average summer temperatures to rise. According to Montgomery County, average annual temperatures are projected to increase significantly, and the greatest changes will occur in the summer and fall.

A lack of a working air conditioning unit or system in an apartment can become a life-threatening issue in the summer months. Our residents have expressed concerns about timely repairs to air conditioning in their apartments. Additionally, others have noted the urgent need for a requirement that all residential units in Rockville have adequate air conditioning systems.

SB 12 takes an important step forward by requiring air conditioning in all rental units in Maryland. With a housing shortage and an affordability crisis in the State, many residents are forced to live in rentals. All residents in our community and across the State must have working air conditioning in their units. SB 12 provides safeguards that protect public health, support equity, and improve the quality of life of our rental community. For these reasons, we urge the Committee to provide SB 12 with a favorable report with amendments report that includes our recommended clarifications.