



February 5, 2025

Bill: House Bill 80 - Landlord and Tenant - Residential Leases - Fee Disclosures Economic Matters Committee

Position: Support

The City of Gaithersburg writes to express our strong support for House Bill 80, which will require a landlord to provide certain information to prospective tenants about fees imposed on tenants and prohibiting a landlord from imposing a mandatory fee that was not disclosed.

Two years ago, the City of Gaithersburg adopted several changes to its own Landlord-Tenant Relations Ordinance to strengthen protections for renters. Among those changes was incorporating requirements for landlords to provide and maintain a notice providing a current schedule of all required and optional fees for a prospective tenant, including but not limited to, application fees, parking fees, pet fees, bicycle fees, storage fees, lost key fees, late fees, lock out fees, cable and/or internet fees, and any other fees, whatsoever. This notice must be provided to any prospective tenant as either a physical or electronic copy. It must also be placed conspicuously in the leasing office, if one exists, and posted on the building's website, also if one exists.

The objective of this effort was to ensure that the costs advertised by apartment communities are accurate and representative of the true costs associated with living there. Too often, tenants are surprised to learn about hidden, sometimes mandatory fees that are not clear and obvious in the listed price of a rental unit after a lease has been executed, leaving the tenants with an obligation they may no longer be able to afford. Furthermore, the practice of hiding or failing to disclose such fees could place landlords who share the full price for renters at a competitive disadvantage.

The challenges we face with a supply strained and cost-burdened housing market should not be exacerbated by trapping renters into financial commitments for which they were unaware, and potentially unable to fulfill. Like the City of Gaithersburg's own regulations, HB 80 simply mandates transparency, levels the playing field, and ensures that renters across Maryland know what they're getting into before it's too late. Therefore, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 80.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 301-466-5350. We appreciate your support.

Respectfully submitted,

Jud Ashman, Mayor
City of Gaithersburg

City of Gaithersburg • 31 South Summit Avenue, Gaithersburg, Maryland 20877-2038
301-258-6300 • FAX 301-948-6149 • cityhall@gaithersburgmd.gov • gaithersburgmd.gov

MAYOR
Jud Ashman

COUNCIL MEMBERS
Neil Harris
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Yamil Hernández
Jim McNulty
Robert Wu

CITY MANAGER
Tanisha R. Briley