

GGWash Comments on SB 513, Fire Prevention.pdf

Uploaded by: Dan Reed

Position: FAV



Chair Brian Feldman
and Members, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 19, 2026

Senate Bill 513 – Fire Prevention – Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee:

My name is Dan Reed and I serve as the Maryland Policy Director for Greater Greater Washington, a nonprofit that supports better housing, land use, and transportation policies throughout Greater Washington and beyond. **GGWash strongly supports Senate Bill 513.**

As written, this bill would require the owners of high-rise apartment buildings undergoing renovation to install fire safety systems such as sprinklers, fire-resistant doors, and smokeproof exit enclosures. It is a response to the findings of the Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High Rise Apartment Buildings, formed in the aftermath of a [catastrophic fire](#) on February 23, 2023 at the Arrive Silver Spring apartments. Hundreds of people were displaced, and a young woman named Melanie Diaz lost her life.


This matter is personal to me. Fires were a common occurrence in that complex when I was growing up there in the 1990s. Some of my most formative memories are of being trapped in our 14th floor apartment during fires; strangers helping my mother carry me down the stairs while evacuating; and waiting in the cold night for the firefighters to say it was safe to return.

Thousands of people across Maryland live in buildings like Arrive, which was built in 1967 and predates modern fire regulations. Not surprisingly, voters support making them safer. In January, we commissioned a [poll that found 87% of Marylanders support this bill](#). We hope you'll stand with the tenants of these buildings who deserve safer housing, and ask for a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dan Reed'.

Dan Reed
Maryland Policy Director

The Washington, DC region is great  and it can be greater.

SB513_FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Donna Edwards

Position: FAV



MARYLAND STATE & D.C. AFL-CIO

Affiliated with the National AFL-CIO

Donna S. Edwards
President

Samuel Epps, IV
Secretary-Treasurer

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SB 513 - Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

February 19, 2026

SUPPORT

Donna S. Edwards

President

Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB 513. On behalf of our 700 affiliated unions, I offer the following comments.

SB 513 is a clear investment in public safety and the skilled workforce that protects Marylanders everyday. This legislation modernizes our fire prevention framework by ensuring that assistant and special assistant State Fire Marshals meet consistent, statewide standards for training, certification, and professional practice. Establishing uniform qualifications strengthens the quality and consistency of fire inspection and investigations across all jurisdictions.

The bill also strengthens life-safety protections by requiring smoke detectors in interior corridors, and during substantial renovations, the installation of sprinkler systems. These are both essential, life-critical infrastructures. By setting statewide standards for the professionals who inspect, test, and maintain these systems, the bill ensures that this work is performed by properly qualified, highly skilled technicians. These improvements increase system reliability, reduce preventable failures, and ultimately save lives.

Additionally, SB 513 recognizes the specialized work of technical fire alarm and fire-protection. Maryland's fire alarm professionals are part of an important industry that keeps our buildings safe and our systems functioning. A licensing and regulatory framework ensures that this work is performed by qualified individuals, supports the workforce, and protects residents. Maryland is already home to strong apprenticeship programs that align with national fire-protection standards, providing a robust pipeline of highly trained workers ready to perform this complex, technical work.

SB 513 strengthens public safety from various angles, through better standards, safer buildings, and a well-trained, skilled workforce. For these reasons, we urge a favorable vote on SB 513.



unions@mddclabor.org



www.mddclabor.org



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SB513_FAV_Stewart.pdf

Uploaded by: Kate Stewart

Position: FAV



MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL
ROCKVILLE, MARYLAND

KATE STEWART
COUNCILMEMBER
MONTGOMERY COUNTY COUNCIL

February 19, 2026

TO: The Honorable Brian Feldman
Chair, Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

FROM: Kate Stewart
Montgomery County Councilmember, District 4

RE: Senate Bill 513, *Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians Support*

My name is Kate Stewart and I serve as the Montgomery County Councilmember for District 4. Today, I write on behalf of myself in support of Senate Bill 513, *Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians*.

The aim of the bill is to tighten fire safety standards in high-rise residential buildings by increasing local oversight and putting in place stricter technical standards for fire protections systems. This bill would authorize a county or municipality to designate fire marshals subject to approval of the State Fire Marshal to conduct inspections and enforcement. SB 513 also requires installation of certain fire prevention in certain high-rise residential buildings, particularly automatic fire sprinkler systems in these buildings that are undergoing substantial renovation. The bill also requires the State Fire Prevention Commission to adopt certain regulations relating to fire alarm system technicians.

In 2023, an apartment fire in Downtown Silver Spring resulted in the tragic loss of 25-year-old Melanie Diaz and her two dogs. It displaced over 400 residents and hospitalized 20 people, including firefighters responding to the incident. Unfortunately, the apartment complex was one

The Honorable Brian Feldman

Re: Senate Bill 513, *Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians*

February 19, 2026

Page 2

of the 76 high-rise buildings located in Montgomery County without automatic sprinkler systems. Studies show that automatic sprinkler systems can reduce civilian deaths by fire by up to 87% and significantly decrease other negative outcomes, including property damage and environmental impact. While newer buildings now require them, many older high-rise apartments still lack this critical safety feature, putting residents at risk.

This bill is essential to expand existing fire protections, especially for tenants living in older high-rise apartment buildings. The additional required regulations for designating local fire marshals and licensing and regulating fire alarm system technicians and fire alarm system companies add additional tools to safeguard against future incidents like the one we had in Silver Spring.

Increased fire safety equipment in all high-rise buildings is essential to the safety and well-being of residents and in preventing future fire tragedies. I urge this committee to vote favorably for Senate Bill 513 this legislative session. Thank you for your time and attention to this matter, and please don't hesitate to contact my office if you have further questions.

Letter of Support for SB0513.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: FAV

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 416
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3565
800-492-7122 Ext. 3565
Mike.McKay@senate.maryland.gov

Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committees

Administrative, Executive,
and Legislative Review
Children, Youth, and Families
Program Open Space and Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Cumberland Office
100N Mechanic Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
240-362-7040

Williamsport Office
2N Conococheque Street
Williamsport Town Hall
Williamsport, Maryland

February 10, 2026

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Support for SB0513

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their support for **Senate Bill 513: Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High–Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians**. This bill will authorize a county or municipal corporation to designate certain fire marshals with the approval of the State Fire Marshal or to request that the State Fire Marshal designate certain fire marshals and will require the State Fire Marshal to adopt certain regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and certification of designees; will require installation of certain fire prevention in certain high-rise residential buildings, beginning October 1, 2026.

The Fire/EMS Coalition supports Senate Bill 513.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Mike McKay'.

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Voting Organizations:

Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)
Maryland State Firefighter's Association (MSFA)
State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)
Metro Fire Chief's Association
Professional Firefighters of Maryland

Our Mission Statement

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.

Testimony in support of SB0513 - Fire Prevention.p

Uploaded by: Richard KAP Kaplowitz

Position: FAV

SB0513_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
02/19/2026
Richard Keith Kaplowitz
Frederick, MD 21703

TESTIMONY ON SB#/0513 – FAVORABLE

Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0513, Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

As the father-in-law of a firefighter in Montgomery County she has discussed with her mother and me the dangers present when fighting a fire in a high-rise residential building. During my own career in Information Technology I was trained to serve as a fire marshal for my floor in our business high rise building. I know how important having knowledgeable and trained resources can be in any fire emergency.

This bill will authorize a county or municipal corporation to designate certain fire marshals with the approval of the State Fire Marshal or to request that the State Fire Marshal designate certain fire marshals and requiring the State Fire Marshal to adopt certain regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and certification of designees; requiring installation of certain fire prevention in certain high-rise residential buildings; etc.

This bill can save lives and protect residents of these buildings as well as first responders fighting any fires in these locations.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SB0513.

M&A_Testimony_Local 669 Robert Cooper_HB149 SB513_

Uploaded by: Robert Cooper

Position: FAV



Robert J. Cooper, Jr.
Business Manager

Kristopher D. Winget
Financial Secretary-Treasurer

Carl J. Westby
President-Organizer

TESTIMONY OF ROBERT COOPER, JR.
BUSINESS MANAGER, UA SPRINKLER FITTERS LOCAL 669
BEFORE THE SENATE EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE
AND
THE HOUSE ECONOMIC MATTERS COMMITTEE
HOUSE BILL 149 / SENATE BILL 513 – FAVORABLE

Chair Feldman, Chair Valderrama, and Honorable Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee:

On behalf of UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669, and as a member union of the Mid-Atlantic Pipe Trades Association, I respectfully submit this testimony in strong support of House Bill 149 / Senate Bill 513. Local 669's members install, inspect, and maintain fire sprinkler and suppression systems that protect lives and property in precisely the types of high-occupancy residential buildings addressed by this legislation. Our union represents a national workforce of sprinkler fitters whose training and safety standards are among the highest in the construction industry.

House Bill 149 / Senate Bill 513 is a measured, evidence-based improvement to Maryland's fire-safety framework. It strengthens qualifications and oversight for Assistant State Fire Marshals through uniform statewide standards, modernizes the definition of high-rise buildings consistent with nationally recognized fire-safety principles, and establishes a licensing program for fire alarm system technicians and companies. Fire alarm and sprinkler systems are life-critical infrastructure, and proper oversight and maintenance by qualified professionals is essential to public safety.

Local 669 strongly supports the bill's targeted approach to sprinkler installation in older residential rental high-rise buildings. Rather than imposing an indiscriminate, one-size-fits-all retrofit mandate, the bill appropriately ties sprinkler installation requirements to substantial renovation projects—defined as renovations equal to forty percent of a building's assessed value. This ensures that when significant capital investments are made, modern life-safety protections are incorporated in a reasonable and economically responsible manner.

Road Sprinkler Fitters Local Union No. 669

7050 Oakland Mills Road • Suite 200 • Columbia, Maryland 21046
(410) 381-4300 • fax: (301) 621-8045 • www.sprinklerfitters669.org



From the perspective of the sprinkler-fitting workforce, this legislation promotes the outcomes Maryland residents expect: reliable fire-protection systems, competent oversight, and consistent enforcement. Local 669's apprenticeship and training programs emphasize technical competence, safety, and adherence to nationally accepted fire-protection standards. The public is best served when fire-protection systems are installed and maintained by properly trained professionals and when requirements.

Finally, effective implementation of this legislation will require adequate resources. Local 669 supports ensuring that fire-safety oversight, training, and enforcement functions contemplated by the bill are sufficiently funded so that the State can deliver the safety outcomes the legislation intends—particularly in high-rise residential settings where failures can have catastrophic consequences.

For these reasons, UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 respectfully urges a FAVORABLE report on House Bill 149 / Senate Bill 513.

Sincerely,

Robert Cooper, Jr.

Business Manager

UA Sprinkler Fitters Local 669

SB513 testimony.pdf

Uploaded by: Robert Phillips

Position: FAV

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

-a 501(c)(3) organization

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel



Legislative Committee

17 State circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

Chair: Chief Robert Phillips

Office: 410-974-2222

Cell: 443-205-5030

Email: rfcchief48@gmail.com

SB513: Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High–Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

My name is Chief Robert Phillips, and I am the Legislative Committee Chair for the Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA)

I wish to present testimony in FAVOR of **Senate Bill 513: Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High–Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians**

The MSFA is fully in favor of this bill. This bill allows the Office of the State Fire Marshal to set the minimum standards and qualifications of training for plan reviewers, fire inspectors, fire investigators, assistant fire marshals and fire marshals.

In addition to the above, this bill also requires the installation of sprinklers in a “residential rental high-rise” building that is undergoing a substantial renovation along with other life safety features to protect the occupants in times of emergencies.

This bill also charges the State Fire Prevention Commission with the task of defining certain occupations and the licensing qualifications to obtain and maintain a license as a Fire Alarm System Contractor and a Fire Alarm System Technician.

The MSFA believes that this bill will close some loopholes and raise the quality of work that is needed to be on this very essential business of building safety.

The MSFA asks that you return a **FAVORABLE** vote on **SB513**.

Thank you and I would be glad to answer any questions you might have.

Respectfully

M&A_Roger Manno_SB513 HB149 Correspondance_02.18.2

Uploaded by: Roger Manno

Position: FAV

Roger P. Manno, Esq.
Attorney at Law
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February 18, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Maryland Senate
Miller Senate Office Building, Room 2 West
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

The Honorable Kriselda Valderrama, Chair
House Economic Matters Committee
Maryland House of Delegates
House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman, Chair Valderrama, and Honorable members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee and the House Economic Matters Committee.

I respectfully submit this testimony in support of Senate Bill 513 / House Bill 149 on behalf of Sprinkler Fitters Local 669, a constituent local of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada (the "United Association," or "UA"). I appear in my capacity as an attorney with Manno & Associates, LLC, a government-relations and regulatory law firm engaged in public-safety, infrastructure, and workforce policy matters affecting complex construction and industrial systems.

Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 is a nationwide sprinkler fitter local representing more than 16,000 members across the United States, including journeypersons and apprentices trained through UA-affiliated apprenticeship and continuing-education programs. Its members install, inspect, test, and maintain fire sprinkler and suppression systems in a wide range of occupancies, including high-rise residential buildings, hospitals and healthcare campuses, industrial facilities, warehouses and logistics centers, and other complex structures where reliable fire-protection performance is essential.

Senate Bill 513 / House Bill 149 – Correspondence

From both a public-policy and technical standpoint, Senate Bill 513 / House Bill 149 represents a necessary modernization of Maryland’s fire-prevention and life-safety framework. The legislation properly recognizes that fire sprinkler and fire alarm systems are highly engineered life-safety systems, not ancillary building features, and that their effectiveness depends on trained, qualified personnel operating under clear and enforceable regulatory standards.

Members of Sprinkler Fitters Local 669 perform end-to-end fire sprinkler system work, including installation, inspection, testing, maintenance, repair, and code-compliance upgrades. In practice, these systems function as a primary life-safety measure, often determining whether occupants have sufficient time to evacuate safely during an emergency.

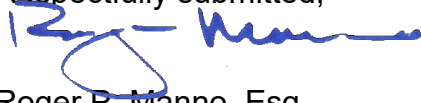
Senate Bill 513 / House Bill 149 advances public safety by clarifying statutory authority and directing the State Fire Marshal and the State Fire Prevention Commission to adopt comprehensive regulations governing assistant fire marshals, fire sprinkler contractors, and fire alarm system technicians. This standards-based approach strengthens safety outcomes while avoiding regulatory fragmentation and inconsistent credentialing practices that can undermine system reliability.

Importantly, the bill aligns life-safety policy with workforce competence. The reliability of fire sprinkler and alarm systems is inseparable from the qualifications of those who design, install, inspect, and maintain them. The legislation reinforces that principle by grounding licensure and oversight in objective professional standards, rather than uneven or ad hoc enforcement.

The legislation also reflects appropriate policy balance. Enhanced fire-protection requirements for residential high-rise buildings are tied to substantial renovations, preserving feasibility while improving occupant safety, while modernizing definitions and regulatory authority to support consistent statewide administration.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge a Favorable Report on Senate Bill 513 / House Bill 149.

Respectfully submitted,



Roger P. Manno, Esq.
Attorney at Law
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Takoma Park 2026 - SB 513 FAV - Fire Prevention -

Uploaded by: Talisha Searcy

Position: FAV



CITY TAKOMA OF PARK MARYLAND

Support Senate Bill 513 - Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 19, 2026

The City of Takoma Park supports and urges favorable consideration of this bill, which would enact some of the recommendations established by the Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High Rise Apartment Buildings as established by HB 823/CH 744 in 2024. That bill, which the City supported, was passed after a tragic apartment fire in Downtown Silver Spring in 2023 that took the life of 25-year-old Melanie Diaz and her two dogs, displaced over 400 residents, and hospitalized 20 people, including firefighters. Almost 90 apartments in the building were condemned.

The Workgroup's report recognizes that full retrofitting may not always be immediately feasible, but there are interim measures that can be implemented to mitigate risk. The bill requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and certification of its assistant and special assistant fire marshal designees. It also requires that residential rental high-rise buildings undergoing substantial renovation have fire sprinklers installed.

This bill is important to Takoma Park because half our residents are renters, and the City has experienced first-hand how traumatizing a fire in a multifamily family building can be. Residents expect to feel safe in their homes and assume that proper steps are taken to protect them. This bill takes a common sense approach to protecting lives.

The City of Takoma Park supports Senate Bill 513 and encourages a favorable vote.

City Contact: Talisha Searcy, Mayor
talishas@takomaparkmd.gov

AOBA SB513 FWA.pdf

Uploaded by: Brian Anleu

Position: FWA



Bill: **SB 513 - Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High–Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians**

Committee: **Education, Energy, and the Environment**

Date: **February 19, 2026**

Position: **Favorable with amendments**

The Apartment and Office Building Association (AOBA) of Metropolitan Washington is a nonprofit trade association representing the owners and managers of more than 23 million square feet of commercial office space and 167,000 apartment rental units in Montgomery and Prince George’s counties. AOBA submits the following testimony in support of Senate Bill 513.

SB 513 aligns the definition of high-rise building with the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) fire codes; mandates additional fire safety measures in residential rental high-rise buildings, including smoke detectors in interior public corridors; and in buildings undergoing substantial renovations the bill requires the installation of automatic fire sprinklers and other enhanced life-safety features. Substantial renovation is defined as a renovation costing at 40% of the assessed building’s value. Finally, it requires the State Fire Prevention Commission to establish licensing and regulatory programs for fire alarm system technicians and companies, similar to existing oversight of fire sprinkler contractors.

AOBA supports efforts to enhance fire safety in multifamily high-rise buildings. This bill strikes the right balance by aligning fire safety retrofits with substantial renovations. AOBA asks that the committee make the following clarifying amendment on page 4, lines 20 – 23:

(II) BEGINNING OCTOBER 1, 2026, AUTOMATIC FIRE SPRINKLERS SHALL BE INSTALLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH NFPA STANDARDS IN EACH RESIDENTIAL RENTAL HIGH–RISE BUILDING THAT IS UNDERGOING A SUBSTANTIAL RENOVATION THAT RECEIVES BUILDING PERMITS ON OR AFTER THAT DATE.

This amendment clarifies that the bill applies prospectively and not to projects with existing building permits that may be completed after October 1, 2026. Multifamily building owners often seek financing to substantially renovate properties. Applying this bill to projects with existing building permits would increase the costs of those projects and potentially jeopardize the financing.

For these reasons, AOBA urges a favorable report on Senate Bill 513 with the amendment outlined above. For more information, please contact Brian Anleu at banleu@aoba-metro.org.



MBIA Letter FWA SB513.pdf

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FWA

February 19, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: MBIA Letter FWA SB 513 - Fire Prevention – Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High–Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

Dear Chair Feldman,

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees of the building industry across the State of Maryland, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding SB513. We submit this testimony in support with amendments of the bill authorizing counties and municipal corporations to designate certain fire marshals with the approval of the Maryland State Fire Marshal, or to request that the State Fire Marshal designate such officials, and requiring the installation of certain fire prevention systems in certain high-rise residential buildings beginning October 1, 2026.

We support the intent of this legislation. Enhancing coordination between local jurisdictions and the State Fire Marshal’s Office will improve responsiveness, strengthen code enforcement, and promote consistent life-safety standards across Maryland. Providing local governments with the authority to designate qualified fire marshals—subject to state approval and standardized training requirements—strikes an appropriate balance between local flexibility and statewide oversight.

We also support the bill’s focus on improving fire prevention measures in high-rise residential buildings. High-rise structures present unique life-safety challenges, and proactive prevention measures are critical to protecting residents, first responders, and property. Updating safety requirements reflects a responsible and forward-looking approach to public safety.

We would suggest the legislation should establish a clear timeline for State approval or denial of locally designated fire marshals. A defined review period—such as 60 days—would provide predictability and avoid unnecessary administrative delays for local governments seeking to enhance enforcement capacity. Also regarding the compliance date may pose challenges for existing high-rise residential buildings, particularly older condominium and multifamily properties that may require significant retrofitting.

We recommend a phased implementation schedule for existing buildings to allow sufficient time for engineering assessments, budgeting, and construction. New construction should comply upon effective

date, but existing structures should be provided reasonable transition periods or hardship extensions where justified.

With these amendments, this legislation will meaningfully enhance fire safety protections while ensuring reasonable implementation and clarity for all affected parties. We respectfully request a favorable report with amendments.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or lgraf@marylandbuilders.org.

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

SB 513 - MoCo_DPS-FRS_Morningstar_FWA (GA 26).pdf

Uploaded by: Sara Morningstar

Position: FWA



Montgomery County

Office of Intergovernmental Relations

ROCKVILLE: 240-777-6550

ANNAPOLIS: 240-777-8270

SB 513

DATE: February 19, 2026

SPONSOR: Senator Smith

ASSIGNED TO: Education, Energy, and the Environment

CONTACT PERSON: Sara Morningstar (Sara.Morningstar@montgomerycountymd.gov)

COUNTY POSITION: Support With Amendments (Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services and Fire and Rescue Service)

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

Senate Bill 513 establishes qualifications of assistant State fire marshals designated by a county or municipality with the approval of the State Fire Marshal, requires additional fire protection measures for non-sprinklered high-rise rental residential buildings, and establishes licensing of fire alarm system technicians and fire alarm system companies in the State. The Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services supports the bill, with amendments.

The devastating fire at a Silver Spring high-rise apartment complex in 2023 caused the death of 25-year-old Melanie Diaz and her two dogs, led to the hospitalization of 20 people including firefighters responding to the incident, and displaced over 400 residents. The General Assembly responded to this tragedy by passing the Melanie Diaz Fire Safety Act in 2024 that included the requirement for building owners to install smoke detectors in interior public corridors in residential high-rise rental buildings by July 31, 2025, as well as creating the Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for pre-1974 High-Rise Apartment Buildings.

The Workgroup's recommendations, as embodied in SB 513, provide a comprehensive framework for improving fire safety in high-rise apartment buildings that do not have fire sprinkler systems and other fire safety technology. The legislation requires that beginning October 1, 2026, automatic fire sprinklers must be installed in each high-rise rental residential building undergoing substantial renovation as defined as being equal to 40% of the State-assessed value of the building. Additionally, SB 513 includes the recommendation to establish specific standards for individuals engaged in the performance, documentation, planning, and coordination of fire safety inspections critical for ensuring tenant safety in high-rise apartment buildings.

Montgomery County has more high-rise rental residential buildings without complete automatic sprinkler systems than any other jurisdiction in the State. Of these existing buildings, a significant number of them will not be able to permanently alter maximum exit travel distances as required under SB 513. For this reason, the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services urges the Committee to adopt an amendment to remove the provision for maximum exit access travel distances, and instead, add language requiring the replacement of inadequate fire pumps. Adequate fire pumps are essential in high-rise residential buildings to overcome gravity and friction loss, ensuring that sprinkler systems and standpipes on upper floors receive sufficient water pressure which will enhance residential fire safety.

Senate Bill 513 with these suggested amendments will move the State another step forward in ensuring that high-rise residential buildings are equipped with adequate fire detection and suppression systems. Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services and Fire Rescue Service support the legislation, as amended, and urges the Committee to adopt a favorable report.

MSP Position on SB0513.pdf

Uploaded by: Breanna Mowbray

Position: INFO



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: Senate Bill 513 **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.

Senate Bill 513 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

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

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

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 Senate Bill 513 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 Senate Bill 513.

MMHA - 2026 - SB513 - INF.pdf

Uploaded by: Matthew Pipkin

Position: INFO



Senate Bill 513

Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment

Bill: Senate Bill 513 - Fire Prevention - Assistant Fire Marshals, Residential Rental High-Rise Property Fire Safety Equipment, and Fire Alarm System Technicians

Date: February 19th, 2026

Position: Informational

The Maryland Multi-Housing Association (MMHA) is a professional trade association established in 1996, whose members consist of owners and managers of more than 214,000 rental housing homes in over 1015 apartment communities. Our members house over 571,000 residents of the State of Maryland. MMHA also represents over 270 associate member companies who supply goods and services to the multi-housing industry.

Senate Bill 513 (“SB 513”) requires the State Fire Marshal to adopt certain regulations governing the qualifications, training, standards, and certification of designees assistant/special fire marshals; mandates sprinklers and life-safety upgrades in substantially renovated residential high-rises; and requires the Fire Prevention Commission to license fire-alarm system technicians and companies.

SB 513 stems from the conclusion of the June 30th Final Report¹ from the “*Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High Rise Apartment Buildings*” as created by House Bill 823/2024. With membership on the Workgroup, MMHA had a representative as an active participant in the important discussions and debates surrounding fire safety for pre-1974 High Rise Apartment Buildings and their recommendations in the final report.

The major point of contention within the Workgroup discussions was at what point a residential rental high-rise building would be required to install automatic fire sprinklers in accordance with NFPA standards. MMHA views SB 513 as a reasonable compromise, as it would compel a “...RESIDENTIAL RENTAL HIGH-RISE BUILDING THAT IS UNDERGOING A SUBSTANTIAL RENOVATION.” as defined in 9-102(C)(3) to install automatic fire sprinklers. **Additionally, MMHA concurs with the Apartment and Office Building Association of Metropolitan Washington’s (AOBA) clarifying amendment that specifies the substantial renovation provision applies prospectively and for those that receive building permits on or after October 1, 2026.**

It is worth noting that for those housing providers that will make additional renovations as a result of the passage of this legislation, rents will increase on tenants at a time when the State has a dearth of affordable housing. Depending on the specific high-rise building, these renovations may lead to longer displacement periods and less housing being available for prospective renters.

Please contact Matthew Pipkin, Jr. at (443) 995-4342 or mpipkin@mmhaonline.org with any questions.

¹Workgroup to Develop Fire Safety Best Practices for Pre-1974 High-Rise Apartment Buildings. (2025, June 30). *Final Report (HB 823, Chapter 744, Acts of 2024)*. Office of the State Fire Marshal, Maryland Department of State Police. [https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDSP/HB823Ch744\(2\)\(2024\)_2025.pdf](https://dlslibrary.state.md.us/publications/Exec/MDSP/HB823Ch744(2)(2024)_2025.pdf)