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## *The Maryland House of Delegates*

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

### **Delegate Stein's Testimony in Support of House Bill 848 Public Safety - State Fire Prevention Code - Trash and Recyclable Materials**

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Guyton, and Fellow Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

House Bill 848 is a short bill that aligns Maryland's Fire Prevention Code with the requirements of the National Fire Protection Association's *101 Life Safety Code*, 2024 Edition, as it relates to valet trash services.

First, what is valet trash collection? Valet trash is a waste management solution for multi-family housing communities that allows residents to place their trash outside their unit doors for scheduled pickup by professional service providers.

This bill is needed to enable these services to continue in Maryland.

In the 2024 Edition of *101 Life Safety Code*, the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) adopted standards to regulate valet trash collection services. However, last year Maryland's Fire Prevention Commission, when adopting the 2024 Edition, deleted the sections related to valet trash collection services and added specific language to prohibit trash or recyclables from being placed in exits, hallways, or an egress balcony for pickup.

This action has kept apartment buildings, condos, or other multi-family dwellings from utilizing this trash pickup service.

The State should not dismiss the work done by NFPA on this issue. "The NFPA standards development process offers a way to establish codes that are both technically robust, practically applicable—and most importantly—created to help protect lives and property from fire and other hazards." All NFPA standards are revised and updated every three to five years, in revision cycles that begin twice each year. Normally, a standard cycle takes approximately two years to complete which means the NFPA's process is lengthy and well vetted.

Second, what are NFPA's standards for valet trash collection? There are five key components:

- Containers cannot exceed a capacity of 15 gallons in corridors, which is roughly the size of the trash can most of us use in our homes and offices.

- Containers must be of liquid-tight construction and be equipped with lids in fully closed positions.
- Containers must be constructed entirely of noncombustible materials and pass certain safety standards.
- Combustible trash or recycling materials shall not occupy a corridor for a single period exceeding 5 hours.
- Containers cannot obstruct the minimum egress width required by the *Life Safety Code*.

These safeguards are in addition to all others required by the *Life Safety Code*.

Third, why is valet trash collection service important?

1. Residents directly benefit from these services. In buildings without garbage chutes, residents must schlep their trash to an outdoor dumpster in all weather conditions. Valet trash collection is also safer for residents, particularly the elderly or disabled, because they don't have to carry trash bags down flights of stairs to the dumpsters.
2. For property managers and owners, the service provides consistent waste removal and reduces odors and pests when residents do not dispose of waste properly. Since the NFPA sets limits on how containers are stored in corridors and materials must be removed daily, it keeps the corridors clear.
3. These services provide better waste management practices. Since trash is removed daily and placed correctly in the dumpster or recycling containers, the service results in cleaner properties that increase overall appeal and allow environmentally sound recyclable collections.

Given that the NFPA took time and substantial effort to consider the concerns of firefighters, property managers, and the public, when it wrote its regulations for valet trash collection, HB 848 simply ensures that valet trash collection services can continue in Maryland under these national standards. To the best of my knowledge, Maryland is the only state to prohibit this service.

In addition, I want to point out that the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland submitted written testimony in support of this bill.

Therefore, I ask for support for HB 848.