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10th District
Senate of Virginia

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Sprinkler Systems

Legislation that I introduced this year dealing with the requirement for sprinklers in high rise residential buildings, Senate Bill 363, has been carried over and sent to the Virginia Housing Commission for further consideration.

This legislation would have required the Board of Housing and Community Development to promulgate regulations that would bring Virginia into a position ten years from now to require that all residential high rise buildings (those taller than 75 feet) would have to have an automatic fire suppression sprinkler system. This has been required in all new buildings and all retrofit buildings since April 1984.

This is purely a matter of life safety. It is of particular interest that as the population in Virginia changes in terms of its demographics that we find more and more of the elderly and disabled looking for multi-family housing to accommodate their needs. I feel that this population is extremely vulnerable particularly in terms of high rise fires. Lobbyists for landlords and real estate holding companies, the usual owners of older high rise buildings, opposed the change due to the expense. However, I feel this bill is about saving lives and that is the most important consideration. Hopefully the Housing Commission will see fit to recommend this legislation once again.

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