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John R. Leopold, County Executive
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****NEWS RELEASE****

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LANDMARK LEGISLATION SAVES LIVES IN ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY Mandatory Residential Sprinklers in New Homes Wins Approval

Millersville (MD) ... County Executive John R. Leopold has won a major victory for the citizens of Anne Arundel County as the County Council approved a measure to require residential sprinklers in all new homes built in Anne Arundel County beginning later this year. "This is a tremendous moment in our County. I commend Councilman Vitale for her sponsorship of this important public safety initiative, as well as the other five councilmen who voted in favor of the legislation. Passage of this law places a firefighter in every new home in our County who will remain on duty at all times. There can be no greater priority than saving lives," the County Executive said in learning of the vote.

Fire Chief John Robert Ray was equally thrilled. "This legislation will save lives. While smoke alarms provide the early warning needed to escape from a fire, residential sprinklers protect the lives of those who cannot escape including the infant in a crib, the child who does not wake up to the sound of the alarm, the elderly and the infirmed. I would like to thank County Executive Leopold for his steadfast support of this bill and his willingness to allow us to advocate for its passage. This is a great day in our County's history that will last for generations to come."

The bill, first introduced in late 2008, was supported by every major fire service organization on a federal, state and local level. The bi-partisan 6-1 vote reflects that this is not a political issue or one based on economics but instead is focused squarely on public safety. Members of the Anne Arundel County Volunteer Firefighters Association, Professional Firefighters IAFF Local #1563, Maryland State Fireman's Association, Maryland State Fire Chief's Association, the Maryland State Fire Marshal and a host of emergency responders were present in Council chambers when the vote was taken.

Residential sprinklers have been identified as the single most effective way to reduce civilian and firefighter fatalities in structure fires. Designed to allow occupants time to escape, these devices frequently control or even extinguish a fire prior to the arrival of responders. Every year, over 3000 Americans die in residential structure fires – more than were killed on 9-11. Fires account for billions in direct property loss annually – more than was caused by Hurricane Katrina. A recent National Fire Protection Association study found the cost of installing residential sprinklers in Anne Arundel County to be the equivalent of installing upgraded carpet or countertops – approximately \$1.61 per square foot.

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