



Commonwealth of Virginia

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Board Matter

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Mr. Chairman,

In Fairfax County we have approximately 1,750 mobile/manufactured homes. Of these, approximately 800 homes are in Franconia District spread across two communities, Audubon Estates and Harmony Place. This makes my district the largest mobile home population in the County. During my many visits to Audubon Estates and Harmony Place, I observed how close the units are to each other and realized that if there was a fire in one of these communities the effects could be catastrophic.

I reached out to a fellow classmate from Leadership Fairfax, Courtney Bulger the then Director of the American Red Cross of Northern Virginia to see if it would be possible to install smoke detectors in each mobile home and provide fire safety education to residents. She immediately agreed to partner with my office to help launch a special initiative for the mobile home parks in my district. I then reached out to our Fairfax County Fire Department and spoke with Assistant Fire Chief Tracey Reed who stated that this type of initiative for manufactured housing had never been done before but the Fairfax County Fire Department would be willing to partner with us on this first of its kind initiative. After many planning meetings, my office, the Red Cross, and The Fairfax County Fire Department launched its first "Fire Safety Day" in Franconia District at Harmony Place on August 27th, 2023. During this first launch of the program, 150 smoke alarms were installed in 46 homes. After the installations were completed, Harmony Place residents surprised us with a homemade barbecue offering tacos and pupusas to thank us for the fire safety efforts in their community.

With the success of this first day, all the partners agreed to move forward with the next “Fire Safety Day” initiative in Audubon Estates. And now, to date, 603 smoke alarms have been installed in 189 homes, making Audubon Estates and Harmony Place safer for the families who live there. This initiative also provides fire safety tips, evacuation plans for residents and containers from Solid Waste Management for community clean-up of debris. There will be at least one more installation day in Audubon Estates to ensure that as many homes as possible receive the no-cost smoke detectors and fire safety education.

The American Red Cross of Northern Virginia and our Fire Department plan to implement this program in manufactured housing communities across the county. This would not be possible without the assistance from the Red Cross and its “Sound the Alarm” program and the dedication and commitment of the community volunteers, CERT volunteers and key staff including, the former Director of the Red Cross of Northern Virginia, Courtney Bulger, David Chesler and Jackie Rivera also from the Red Cross and Fire Chief John Butler, Marlon Murphy, Kat Dye and Battalion Chief Todd Barb from the Fairfax County Fire Department. As well as, Josie Valdez, Manager of Audubon Estates, Marianela Reynado from Tenants and Workers United, and Susan Davidson from Solid Waste Management Division.

Mr. Chairman, I move that a proclamation be prepared to acknowledge the extraordinary work and importance of this fire safety initiative to be presented to the Northern Virginia Red Cross and Fairfax County Fire Department ideally at a future meeting of the Board Supervisors or outside of the Board if necessary.

