

February 9, 2024

Delegate Marc Korman, Chair  
Delegate Regina T. Boyce, Vice Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee Maryland General Assembly  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB0503 - Public Safety - Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Gas Piping Systems  
Requirements and Prohibitions

Dear Delegate Korman and Delegate Boyce,

July 9th, 2021 will be a date engraved in my head for the rest of my life, along with my husband and our four young children. The day began like any other with loving chaos but ended in numbing pain.

As I stood outside of our home, watching firemen struggle to find the fire as smoke poured from our roof. This is common in corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) fires as the fire is constantly fed by gas through the failed CSST piping. Although I denied this could actually be happening to ME, there was no question our house was in fact on fire. You see, at that time I had been a volunteer at the local fire department for almost 20 years, a fire investigator for almost 14 years and as if that wasn't enough "knowledge and protection" - my husband had been a volunteer AND career fireman for almost 20 years. Despite almost our combined 40 years of public safety, we had failed our own family. Our home was less than five years old, so how could two people with such education and experience have failed our family? Trust; that is how. Building a new home is fun and exciting, so you trust. You trust the contractors to uphold the highest safety precautions (both those required by law and those requested by the homeowner), and you trust the manufacturers to produce the safest and most effective products. Even though CSST had been deemed "unsafe" in the fire industry.. we just trusted. We trusted the manufacturers of CSST had done the right thing by taking extra safety precautions, and/or that the construction industry was no longer using CSST. However, that was not true. Manufacturers have been aware of defects and concerns with CSST since 2012, yet they failed to take any further action to ensure it was manufactured and tested to a higher standard. CSST was installed for our stove with a single propane tank outside of the house.

As I stood there and watched my own home burn down, all my trust was shattered. I had witnessed this scene so many times before in my career, but I had never been "the victim". I was a new statistic. It was an out of body experience as I watched as each phase of the fire raged through our house. From experience, I knew with each broken

window, each new hole in the roof and the collapse of the floor, that more and more of our life was being destroyed. In the end, our insurance claim was well over one million dollars. Fortunately for us, our insurance policy was appropriate for our fire claim but since our fire we have learned many homeowners are underinsured. Therefore, an incident like ours would be mentally AND financially devastating to many citizens within the State of Maryland.

Fire does not discriminate and it will gut you to the core, which I learned in a very humbling experience. This is why I work to educate others of the danger of CSST. A lightning strike over 150 feet away from our house had destroyed our lives within 30 minutes, but it could have been prevented. We must do better for the citizens of the State of Maryland, they deserve to have TRUST in the construction industry and the safety of their homes.

Please ensure the passing of HB503 to further ensure the safety of the citizens of the State of Maryland.

Sincerely,

Caryn McMahon  
Fire Victim  
Charles County Resident