

KAREN LEWIS YOUNG
Legislative District 3
Frederick County

Budget and Taxation Committee



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
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The Honorable Marc Korman
The Honorable Regina Boyce
Environment Transportation Committee
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March 25th, 2025

SB0175 Public Safety - Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems - Requirements and Prohibitions

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and honorable members of this committee,

SB175 is the crossfile of HB222, a bill sponsored by Speaker Pro Tem Stein which passed in the House. SB175, like HB222, will require a study be conducted on the vulnerabilities of CSST and make recommendations regarding standards and requirements for the product. There are two differences between SB175 and HB222. The first is the state organization that will lead the study: Department of Labor in the Senate Bill, and State Fire Prevention Commission in the House bill. I believe the State Fire Prevention Commission has the expertise needed to ensure this study will reflect the General Assembly's goal of increasing safety for Maryland. In addition, that organization is no less biased than the Department of Labor, who has not been cooperative for the past two years.

The second difference is that the Senate bill would replace "non-arc resistant" with "nonconductive". After consulting with the Chief Plumbing and Pipe Inspector for Frederick County, I am concerned that "nonconductive" will not actually accomplish our goal of increasing the safety of products available to consumers. With that in mind, I urge this committee to conform SB175 to HB222.

What is Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST)? CSST is a product that moves gas around homes and businesses throughout the country for the purposes of cooking and heating.

This tubing is easy to install but is prone to malfunctions that can cause gas leaks. When there is an electrical discharge, it can cause the gas to ignite. In 2022, we passed a bill that improved the tubing's safety by requiring that CSST sold in Maryland withstand 4.5 coulombs of electrical arcing charge. While the product sold in Maryland is now safer, it is still vulnerable to the most common source of electrical discharge, lightning strikes. Average lightning strikes are anywhere from 15-24 coulombs.

Since 2018, Maryland has experienced three fatalities –two firefighters and one civilian– because of lightning-induced failure of CSST. There have been more than thirty CSST-linked home fires in that same timeframe. What makes a CSST fire particularly dangerous is how quickly the tubing can transport the fire throughout the building, bypassing all other interior obstacles.

Together, we will save lives and protect homes. I urge conforming SB175 to HB222 and a favorable report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Karen Lewis Young". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Senator Karen Lewis Young