



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT
OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

SB 175 – Public Safety - Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems - Requirements and Prohibitions

DATE: March 25, 2025
COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation Committee
POSITION: Favorable with Amendments
FROM: The Office of Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

As the County Executive of Frederick County, I urge the committee to give **SB 175 – Public Safety - Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems - Requirements and Prohibitions** a favorable with amendments report. This bill will develop a study to investigate and make recommendations on the fire risks and prevention strategies necessary when dealing with fuel gas piping systems.

Since 2018, the state of Maryland has experienced three fatalities (two firefighters/one civilian) because of fires caused by lightning-induced failure of CSST. The State has also experienced several non-fatal, though extremely destructive, fires that have been linked to malfunctioning CSST. This issue became deeply personal to Frederick County when a CSST-related fire in 2021 resulted in the line-of-duty death of Frederick County Battalion Chief Josh Laird. While legislation was passed in 2022 to ban non-arc-resistant CSST, further measures are needed to protect our firefighters, first responders, and residents.

The current requirement for CSST to be arc-resistant only ensures that CSST can withstand 4.5 coulombs, per the national standard CSA/ANSI LC-1. Unfortunately, this level of protection is insufficient when the average lightning strike in the US is approximately 15-28 Coulombs and can be much higher. This means that even arc-resistant and/or properly installed CSST is highly vulnerable to malfunction, and higher safety standards are needed.

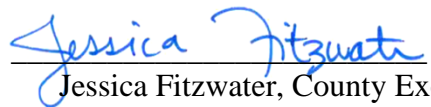
This bill will establish a study to determine recommendations for preventing fire hazards associated with fuel gas piping systems, including CSST. The amendments that I am requesting will conform SB175 to the House version of this bill, HB 222. HB 222, as amended by this committee, directs the Office of the State Fire Marshal to conduct the study in consultation with the Department of Labor and the State Fire Prevention Commission. That study language brings together the right people to solve this problem and I commend the Environment and Transportation Committee for striking a well-balanced approach to this issue.

I also urge the Committee to pass the bill with the prohibition of “non-arc-resistant CSST” and reject the “non-conductive” language. As we direct stakeholders to study the best standards for CSST, state law should maintain consistency with the 2022 Flynn-Laird Act and the International Fuel and Gas Code by using “non-arc-resistant.” Furthermore, the International Fuel and Gas Code does not define “non-conductive” and all CSST products have a conductive jacket, making the prohibition of “non-conductive jacketed CSST” meaningless.

The Housing and Real Property Subcommittee met multiple times to discuss the amendments to HB 222 and reached a consensus on a balanced approach in a transparent manner. The opposition and proponents of this legislation were consulted during the crafting of the House amendments, and multiple compromises were made, such as including CSST manufactures as a consulting entity in the study.

As local and state governments, we have a responsibility to our constituents, including our first responders, to adopt laws, regulations, and building codes that ensure the safety of our communities. This study is the first step in ensuring that the products used in our homes and businesses are capable of withstanding common hazards such as lightning strikes.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 175. I urge you to advance this bill with amendments that confirm it to the amended HB 222.


Jessica Fitzwater, County Executive
Frederick County, MD