

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel

www.msfa.org



Joel C. McCrea

2nd Vice President
17 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Office 410-974-2222
Cell 410-592-7759
jmccrea@msfa.org

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The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky
Chairman
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: Senate Bill 420 – Public Safety –Firefighting Foam and PFAS Chemicals

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Committee Members:

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 420 sponsored by Senator Elfreth. Without getting technical, perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a group of man-made chemicals that have been manufactured and used in a variety of industries, including firefighting foams, since the 1940s. These chemicals are persistent in the environment and the human body, meaning they do not break down easily and can accumulate over time. There is evidence that consistent exposure to PFAS can lead to adverse human health effects, such as: increased cholesterol levels, decreased fertility, increased risk of cancer, and other adverse health effects in humans.

The proposed changes in Senate Bill 420 will prohibit the use PFAS chemicals in foam for the purpose of firefighting training. The Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute (MFRI), the State's comprehensive training and education system for all Fire/EMS/Rescue programs, recognized the potential problems associated with the use of firefighting foam in the training environment many years ago. MFRI moved to a healthy and environmentally safe alternative such as dish soap to demonstrate the application of firefighting foam used in fire training.

For the safety of our firefighters and protection of the environment, the MSFA supports the proposed changes.

We thank you for your continued support of the Fire/ EMS/Rescue Service in Maryland and look forward to a favorable outcome for Senate Bill 420.

Sincerely,

Joel C. McCrea
2nd Vice President