

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
www.msfa.org



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Madam Chair Kelley

Vice Chairman Feldman

SUPPORT OF SB 447 – PUBLIC HEALTH – PRODUCTS CONTAINING A FLAME RETARDENT CHEMICAL

Good afternoon Madam Chair Kelley, Vice Chairman Feldman and members of the Senate Finance Committee.

My name is Johnie Roth, Jr. and I chair the Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA), and I am writing in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 447 sponsored by Senator Guzzone and many others.

The MSFA is a statewide organization representing over 25,000 volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics and 363 member companies.

I think that you will agree that both volunteer and career firefighters and emergency medical service providers in the State of Maryland are the best in the United States and are emulated all over the world. These men and women are dedicated to providing the best services to those Marylanders that are having the absolute worst day of their lives.

These men and women are trained for any occurrence from a trouble breathing patient call, to an active shooter in a school, to a WMD incident, to a single family dwelling fire.

Today's firefighters enter into burning structures that are made of lightweight construction and burn hotter and quicker than in the past. Many homes are pre-fabricated in advance of their construction. Besides dealing the lightweight construction problems and structural stability today's firefighters face "great unknowns". Most fires today are plastic and synthetic and manmade materials, and because of that everything else in the room is ignited as well. In a recent article "Today, all manner of materials are treated with flame retardant chemicals, often required by law, including children's pajamas, upholstery for plush furniture and car seats".

Our firefighter heros are being exposed to flame retardants that have been linked to a number of multiple human health effects, including impacts on fertility, reproduction, brain development, immune system function, and cancer. When a firefighter enters a structure fire, a haze of cancer-causing toxins, including those contained in a chemical flame retardant, surrounds them. These materials seep into our protective clothing, penetrate our breathing apparatus, and even create secondary exposure once returning to the fire station.

Madam Chair, this is not the first time that we have sounded the alarm about Flame Retardant Chemicals in Maryland and we have an obligation to protect all Marylanders but also our Firefighters and Rescuers and it is for those that we are here today in Support of Senator Guzzone's SB 447 and respectfully request a FAVORABLE REPORT.

Thank you Madam Chair and I'd be glad to answer any question that you may have.

**Johnie F. Roth, Jr.
MSFA Chairman
Legislative Committee**