

Senate Bill 481
State Fire Marshal – Investigations-Reporting Requirement
Letter of support

I am writing on behalf of the residents of the Fallstaff Community of Northwest Baltimore to support Senate Bill 481. In August 2020, there was a well publicized explosion on Labyrinth Road in the Fallstaff Community that killed 2 residents and seriously injured seven. Three homes were destroyed, a fourth was demolished and countless residences on Labyrinth and Nadine Roads were badly damaged. Some of the residents of the affected area had to leave their homes and go live in hotels. The last one I heard about didn't go back to her home until January 1, 2021. There may be others that I don't know of who still have not been able to return.

Immediately following the explosion, I started to get questions from residents who wanted to know what had caused the explosion. Residents in the surrounding area whose homes had been shaken were concerned that whatever had triggered this horrible event could happen again in other parts of our community and other communities in and around Fallstaff.

I continued to get questions on the cause of the explosion and I continued to raise inquiries with representatives from the offices of the President of the City Council, the Mayor's Office, the State Delegates for the area and the Fire Department. The answer from all of these sources from August through December (5 months) was the same, "the investigation was still ongoing and they would keep me posted." Finally on January 11, 2021 I received a notice from the new Mayor's Office of a press release planned on the Update on the Fatal August Explosion for the next day, January 12, 2021.

Five months was far too long to wait for an answer to such a serious question. Residents were threatening to go to the press and I couldn't tell them that they were wrong. The 90 day reporting requirements established in Senate Bill 481 are far more acceptable. As the President of the Fallstaff Improvement Association Inc., I can see how our community can benefit from this Bill even if the report was not final, an interim report from an official source is better than nothing.

Sandra A. Johnson
President Fallstaff Improvement Association Inc.