

# MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

REPRESENTING THE VOLUNTEER FIRE, RESCUE, AND EMS PERSONNEL OF MARYLAND.



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## HB 930: Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Funds – Property Acquisition and Construction of Facilities

Good afternoon Madam Chair and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Joel McCrea and I am the President of the Maryland State Firefighters Association. I am here to testify in favor of **HB 930 sponsored by Delegate Stein**. The bill is concerning the use of Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Funds for the purchase and construction of fire, rescue, or ambulance facilities.

State money provided under the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund can currently be used, in part, to acquire land that is **adjacent** to an existing fire, rescue, or ambulance facility for the purpose of rehabilitating that facility. The amendment provided by this bill would remove the requirement that the land be adjacent to the existing facility.

This amendment is needed in order to enable use of the Senator William H. Amoss Fire, Rescue, and Ambulance Fund to assistance the fire, rescue, or ambulance companies that are either merging or in need of a new station but cannot rebuild at their current location.

I can give you some examples why this is needed. In order to improve operating efficiencies, response rates, and provide for the survival of the volunteer fire, rescue, and EMS services, several neighboring companies in Baltimore County have merged. In order to provide the most efficient response to the new service area created by the combined companies, a new station needs to be established at a central location in the new service areahb930

We are also seeing more and more stations that have been in existence for many years at their current location, but are now in need of more modern and larger facilities. Fire equipment has evolved over the years and new requirements to meet current safety standards now require more space. However, these stations are in locations where they cannot expand. I am aware of stations in Baltimore, Montgomery, Allegany, and Garrett Counties that are in this situation but are unable to move forward with construction of a new station that would need to locate on land that is not adjacent to their current location.

This relatively minor amendment would provide much needed flexibility in the distribution of these funds to assist the volunteer companies that are merging or updating their aging stations, to better serve their communities.

Thank you for your time and I'm asking each of you for your support.