



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES

Office of the Chief

Jan H. Gardner
County Executive

Thomas E. Coe, Chief

HB1052 - Public Safety - Natural Gas and Liquefied Propane Piping Systems - Construction Requirements (Flynn and Laird Act)

Written Testimony from: Chief Thomas E. Coe,
Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services

Position: Favorable

Committee: Finance

Date: March 31, 2022

The dangers of non-arc resistant Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing (CSST) is not common knowledge to the general public. When high levels of electricity are introduced into a structure by a direct or indirect lightning strike, the unprotected CSST commonly fails when an arc is created with other nearby metal objects. The ensuing gas-fed fire has caused millions of dollars of property loss, but more significantly, those fires have cost lives.

In Frederick County alone, we have experienced two fire fatalities within the last 4 years from lightning striking a structure that contained CSST that was not arc resistant. In 2018, a civilian died in a residential fire south of Urbana when, after lightning struck the residence, non-arc resistant CSST failed, and the occupant was trapped by the ensuing fire.

Then on August 11, 2021, this issue hit close to home when Battalion Chief Josh Laird, a 22-year veteran of our organization, died in the line of duty fighting a residential fire in a home that had been struck by lightning and experienced a failure in the CSST that was not arc-resistant.

If passed into law, House Bill 1052 will ensure that moving forward in Maryland, if Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing is used, that it be arc-resistant and jacketed.

For the safety of all Marylanders as well as our firefighters who respond to these fires, I urge a **FAVORABLE** report for House Bill 1052 with the amendments provided by the sponsor.