



CAROLINE COUNTY
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CAROLINE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OFFICE

JAMES TRAVIS BREEDING, PRESIDENT
LARRY C. PORTER, VICE PRESIDENT
NORMAN FRANKLIN BARTZ, III., COMMISSIONER
109 Market Street, Room 123
Denton, Maryland 21629

House Bill 788/SB414

Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland

Position: **SUPPORT W/ AMENDMENTS**

Date: March 16, 2023

To: Appropriations

The Caroline County Commissioners **SUPPORT** HB 788/SB 414 – Commission to Advance and Strengthen Fire Fighting Within Maryland, with amendments.

Caroline County is home to 8 volunteer fire companies. Like most of the State, there is a concern regarding recruitment and retention within the firefighting community. Being a financially disadvantaged County, Caroline is currently unable to form a paid, professional department. However, we do provide benefits for service through the Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) with a recent contribution of \$1.5M; bringing the program to 26% funded.

Currently, this bill only allows for the President of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) to appoint 1 county government representative with experience in county budgeting. The Caroline County Commissioners believe this Commission would best be served if there was a representative from Western Maryland, Southern Maryland, the Eastern Shore, Baltimore City, and a member from a larger County such as Montgomery, Prince Georges, or Howard. As this is a Statewide issue, adding geographical diversity provides a clearer picture of the unique challenges that each area within Maryland faces.

With this, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 788/Senate Bill 414 with the above-mentioned amendments.

Sincerely,

J. Travis Breeding
President
Caroline County Commissioners