

# PROFESSIONAL FIRE FIGHTERS OF MARYLAND



CHARTER 1969

DATE: February 21, 2023

TO: Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
House Health & Government Operations Committee

FROM: Jeffrey Buddle, President  
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

RE: HB470 – Fire Fighting Training – Oriented Strand Board - Prohibition

The Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland represents more than 10,000 active and retired professional fire fighters and emergency medical services personnel who proudly serve the citizens of the State of Maryland.

Health and safety are of the utmost importance to this organization and the fire fighters we represent. Unfortunately, more fire fighters are dying of cancer each year. The disease – now the number one killer of fire fighters – poses the greatest risk to a healthy fire service. Almost 75% of those honored at the IAFF's 2022 Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial (348 of 469) were members who died from occupational cancer.

In July of 2022 the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) announced the classification of occupational exposure as a firefighter as a Group 1 carcinogen, the agency's highest designation for agents that carry sufficient evidence of carcinogenicity in humans.

IARC's new evaluation of firefighting considers 52 cohort and case-control studies, 12 case reports, and seven meta-analyses. According to the agency, some of the most informative research included more than 30 non-overlapping cohort studies from around the world that followed firefighters for cancer over time, including, right here in North America.

We have included several additional pages of written testimony that summarizes a variety of discussion points concerning the use of oriented strand board in fire fighter training exercises. Additionally, included for your reference is the following study related to this subject matter:

*Kenneth W. Fent, Alexander Mayer, Stephen Bertke, Steve Kerber, Denise Smith & Gavin P. Horn (2019): Understanding airborne contaminants produced by different fuel packages during training fires, Journal of Occupational and Environmental Hygiene, DOI: 10.1080/15459624.2019.161787*

On behalf of the members of Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, we respectfully request a favorable report on House Bill 470.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Buddle, President  
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

*The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 25 local IAFF affiliates from the following jurisdictions:*

**Federal:** Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Fort George G. Meade, National Capital Federal Fire Fighters, National Institutes of Health

**State:** Baltimore / Washington International Airport

**Local:** Annapolis, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, Talbot County, Worchester County