



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB 468 – Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland

Chair Wilson, Vice Chair Crosby, Members of Economic Matters –

Today, lithium-ion batteries are used widely in everything from cell phones and laptops to electric vehicles (EVs), mobility devices, and electric vehicle charging stations. Although lithium-ion batteries have advantages including fast charging speeds, high storage density (i.e., storing more energy in a smaller area), and a long lifecycle, they also pose significant safety and health hazards to Maryland residents and first responders.

Due to their composition, these batteries are highly volatile and flammable, creating a serious risk of fire or explosion particularly when exposed to high temperatures. The way a lithium-ion battery produces power generates heat. If a lithium-ion battery fails -- which could happen for numerous reasons including exposure to high external temperatures; physical damage; a faulty or poor-quality, unregulated battery or charger; overcharging; and improper storage -- and overheats, it can fuel a fire in seconds. Unfortunately, lithium-ion battery fires are difficult to extinguish (they cannot be put out with water), not easily contained, and self-sustaining with the ability to reignite hours or even days later. Lithium-ion batteries can also release highly toxic gases when they fail. Maryland State Fire Marshal Brian Geraci thinks that lithium-ion batteries are such a growing problem that he created an online [Maryland Lithium-Ion Fire Reporting](#) interactive dashboard that currently details 39 incidents and 4 injuries since tracking began last April. Furthermore, the disposal of used lithium-ion batteries not only poses the same safety risks already cited but also additional health and environmental hazards, particularly when they end up in landfills or incinerators and leach into soil and water sources.

As legislative solutions to improve the safety of lithium-ion battery use in Maryland were discussed, the significant amount of information and input still needed to move forward effectively became clear. HB 468 meets this challenge by establishing a Commission with diverse representation (see list below) to study and make legislative, regulatory, programmatic, and other recommendations. Specifically, the Commission will identify best practices and guidelines to 1) prevent, detect, and suppress lithium-ion battery fires in consumer, transportation, and utility applications as well as in recycling facilities; 2) safely reuse, recycle, and store lithium-ion batteries; 3) train, educate, and better inform the public and industry about lithium-ion battery safety; 4) identify other considerations for enhancing the safety and reuse of lithium-ion batteries in the State.

For these reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 468.

Proposed Members for Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland

- Department of the Environment representative, appointed by the Secretary of the Environment
- Maryland Energy Administration representative, appointed by the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration
- Lithium-ion battery manufacturer representative, appointed by the Director of the Maryland Energy Administration
- State Fire Marshal, or the Fire Marshal's designee
- As appointed by the President of the Maryland Association of Counties:
 - one representative with a background in emergency response
 - one representative with a background in public works
 - one representative with a background in climate, clean energy, and infrastructure
- Power Plant Research Project representative, appointed by the Secretary of Natural Resources
- Public Service Commission representative, appointed by the Chairman of the Public Service Commission
- Professional Firefighters of Maryland representative, designated by the President of the Professional Firefighters of Maryland
- Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association representative, designated by the President of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Association
- Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute representative, designated by the Director of the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute
- Citizen representative, designated by the President of the Maryland State Firemen's Association
- State public utility representative
- Maryland Recycling Network representative
- Maryland Delaware Solid Waste Association representative