



**March 20, 2024**

Delegate Joseline A. Pena-Melnyk, Chair  
Health & Government Operations Committee  
Room 241, House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Re: HB1472-Professional and Volunteer Firefighter Innovative Cancer Screening Technologies Program - Funding

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. On average between 65% - 75% of those honored each year at the IAFF Fallen Fire Fighter Memorial in Colorado Springs, Colorado are members who have 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.

Early detection of cancers is a critical element in favorable long-term outcomes. Simply stated, if cancers are identified early there is a much higher probability of successful treatment as opposed to diagnosing cancer when it has progressed to more advanced stages. This bill would authorize the Governor to provide funding in the annual budget submitted to the General Assembly to assist with the cost of cancer screenings for members of the fire and rescue service throughout the State of Maryland.

On behalf of the members of Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland, we strongly urge a favorable report on HB1472.

Submitted respectfully,



Jeffrey Buddle, President  
Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland

*The membership of the Professional Fire Fighters of Maryland includes 27 IAFF local 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 City, Allegany County, Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City (2 affiliates), Baltimore County, Carroll County, Cecil County, Charles County, Cumberland City, Frederick County, Garrett County, Hagerstown, Howard County, Montgomery County, Ocean City, Prince Georges County, Queen Annes County, Salisbury, St. Mary County, Talbot County, Worchester County*