



METROPOLITAN FIRE CHIEFS COUNCIL OF MARYLAND

SB0175 – Public Safety – Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems – Requirements and Prohibitions

Date: February 4, 2025 (hearing date 02/06/2025)

Committee: Education, Energy and the Environment

Position: Favorable

Written Testimony: Submitted by Deputy Chief Gordon Wallace, Legislative Subcommittee Representative of the Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Council of Maryland

The Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Council of Maryland supports SB0175 - Public Safety - Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems - Requirements and Prohibitions. This legislation increases safety standards for corrugated stainless steel tubing (CSST) and prohibits the sale, transfer, or distribution of CSST that does not meet the safety requirements.

CSST is a product used to carry gas (propane and natural gas) in homes and commercial buildings and is prone to failure due to lightning strikes that can result in fires and explosions. It is not uncommon for CSST gas lines to be run in concealed spaces of a structure, therefore making the detection of a problem difficult and often delayed. The malfunctioning of this product was responsible for the two line of duty deaths of Frederick County Battalion Chief Josh Laird in 2021 and Howard County Lieutenant Nathan Flynn in 2018. HB1052 (the Flynn Laird Act) passed in 2022 prohibited the use of non-arc resistant CSST, but this standard alone is not enough to prevent malfunctions of the product. In addition to these tragedies, the Fire Service in Maryland continues to respond to fires and explosions because of the failure of CSST systems and most are direct results of lightning induced arcing and subsequent fugitive gas escape. These incidents result in millions of dollars of property loss and put the residents and first responders of Maryland at great risk.

Time and experience have demonstrated that we still have work to do to protect our citizens from the dangers of CSST. SB0175 identifies CSST constructed to withstand 36 coulombs of electrical arcing charge as the new standard in Maryland. CSST that is built to withstand 36 coulombs can take a larger electrical insult than other CSST products on the market. Additionally, this bill makes the sale, offer for sale, transfer or distribution of non-compliant CSST illegal and violators are subject up to a \$1,000 civil penalty.

This proposed legislation seeks to improve the safety standard for CSST products. SB0175 is critical legislation that if enacted will make the residents, visitors and first responders in Maryland safer. The Metropolitan Fire Chiefs Council of Maryland the committee for a FAVORABLE report for SB0175.