



FREDERICK COUNTY GOVERNMENT

DIVISION OF FIRE & RESCUE SERVICES
Office of the Chief

Jessica Fitzwater
County Executive

Thomas E. Coe, Chief

HB0222 – Public Safety – Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing for Fuel Gas Piping Systems Requirements and Prohibitions

Written Testimony from: Chief Thomas E. Coe, 
Frederick County Division of Fire and Rescue Services

Position: Favorable

Committee: Environment and Transportation

Date: January 24, 2025

The dangers of Corrugated Stainless-Steel Tubing (CSST) are not common knowledge to the general public. When high levels of electricity are introduced into a structure by a direct or indirect lightning strike CSST commonly fails when an arc is created with nearby metal objects. The ensuing gas fed fire has caused millions of dollars of property loss but more over those fires have cost lives.

In Frederick County alone we have experienced two fire fatalities within the last 7 years from lightning striking a structure that contained CSST that was not arc resistant. In 2018, a civilian died in a residential fire south of Urbana after lightning struck the residence, CSST failed, and the occupant was trapped by the ensuing fire.

Then on August 11, 2021, this issue hit close to home when Battalion Chief Josh Laird, a 22-year veteran of our organization, died in the line of duty fighting a residential fire in a home that had been struck by lightning and experienced a failure in the CSST.

In 2022, the Maryland Legislature took a step forward to protect both our citizens and first responders by passing The Flynn Laird Act. Time and experience have demonstrated that we still have work to do to protect our citizens from the dangers of CSST. HB022 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 models on the market. Additionally, this bill makes the sale, offer for sale, transfer or distribution of non-compliant CSST illegal and associates a \$1,000 civil penalty.

For the safety of all Marylanders as well as our firefighters who respond to these fires, I urge a **FAVORABLE** report for House Bill 0222.