

# MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

*-a 501(c)(3) organization*

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel*



## **Legislative Committee**

17 State circle

Annapolis, MD 21401

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## HB1532 Utility RELIEF (Reducing Energy Load Inflation for Everyday Families) Act

### Letter of Information:

Chair Feldman

Vice. Chair Kagan

Members of the Energy, Education and Environment Committee:

Hello, my name is Chief Robert Phillips and I am the legislative committee chair for The Maryland State Firefighters Association (MSFA). The MSFA represents 360 plus volunteer fire companies across the state with a membership of over 27,000 members.

The MSFA would like to provide this letter of information pertaining to HB1532. We are in favor of the intent of this bill and what it can accomplish for the future of the state. Our only issue is how we get to where we want to be. On page 14, the "Local Government" article 1-1320 begins with the changes required for the local government as to setting up specific software with reporting requirements and making changes in the present inspection practices and policies.

With the local or municipal government having to develop or purchase software that would meet the new requirements there could be and most likely will a significant cost increase which will in turn stretch already strained budgets resulting in lower assistance to the local volunteer fire system and service.

In addition to the possible loss of income and of more importance to the fire service would be the new inspection guidelines. The proposed new guidelines would allow for a "remote inspection" process. The present guidelines would have only an "in person" inspection taking place on every new residential solar installation. This inspection will include proper placement and installation of the panels such that they meet the building codes as well as the fire code, allowing the fire service to be able to carry out roof operations in a time of an emergency. The inspection will also include proper electrical devices such as disconnects as well as the electrical connections between the panels, the power inverter(s) and the residential system. Additionally, if the solar panel installation includes on site energy storage for times of lower generation there would be many more items to be addressed during the inspection process. The

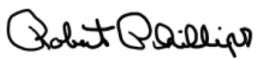
MSFA fully believes in the present system of having “in person” only inspections for these types of installations.

The belief of the MSFA is that a “remote” inspection will leave too much up to interpretation of supplied information, rather than known information from a person on the site doing the inspection. The emergency first responders that we represent need to know that whatever they are called to do will be as safe as we can make it through all the best efforts of the governing bodies that they serve. Having to work in an environment where there was not a thorough, complete inspection would add unnecessary risk to all involved.

One possible solution to our issue would be on page 16 line 17 after the word “section” replace “may” with “shall” and on page 16 line 21 after the word “system” also replace the word “may” with “shall”, which would require an “in person” inspection take place.

Thank you for allowing me to present this information and I am available for any further questions or comments at my contact information listed on this letter.

Respectfully:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Phillips". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Phillips" clearly distinguishable.

Chief Roert Phillips

MSFA Legislative Chair