

SB0553_RichardKaplowitz_FAV
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TESTIMONY ON SB#/0553 – FAVORABLE

Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland – Reestablishment

TO: Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan and members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

FROM: Richard Keith Kaplowitz

My name is Richard K. Kaplowitz. I am a resident of District 3. I am submitting this testimony in support of SB#0553, Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland – Reestablishment

My daughter-in-law, a career firefighter, has discussed the problems first responders have with fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. The National Fire Protection Association discusses *Lithium-Ion Battery Safety*¹

Lithium-ion batteries are increasingly found in devices and systems that the public and first responders use or interact with daily. While these batteries provide an effective and efficient source of power, the likelihood of them overheating, catching on fire, and even leading to explosions increases when they are damaged or improperly used, charged, or stored.

Lithium-ion battery fires are a rapidly growing safety hazard in Maryland, with dozens of incidents reported annually involving e-bikes, scooters, and consumer electronics, particularly in Montgomery County. These fires often cause significant property damage (up to \$500k+), injuries, and dangerous, toxic smoke.²

- **Rising Incidents:** A dedicated [Maryland State Fire Marshal dasSBoard](#) has tracked numerous incidents since April 2023,, with over 50+ reported statewide by late 2024.

The rise in incidents demands an accelerated response in Maryland to protect both our first responders and our residents. To accomplish that aim this bill will reestablish the Commission to Advance Lithium-Ion Battery Safety in Maryland with an altered membership and mandate; and requiring the Commission to report its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly on or before December 1, 2027.

The report that will be required will assist the General Assembly in creation of legislation that will address the identified findings and recommendations.

I respectfully urge this committee to return a favorable report and pass SB0553.

¹ <https://www.nfpa.org/education-and-research/home-fire-safety/lithium-ion-batteries>

² Google AI Search "lithium-ion batteries fires in Maryland"