



State of Maryland
Department of State Police
Government Affairs Unit
Annapolis Office (410) 260-6100

POSITION ON PROPOSED LEGISLATION

DATE: April 2, 2026

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 621 **POSITION:** Oppose

BILL TITLE: Public Safety – State Fire Prevention Code – Trash and Recyclable Materials

REVIEW AND ANALYSIS

This legislation requires the State Fire Prevention Commission to formally adopt specific provisions of the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code (2024 edition). By mandatory adoption of the regulations, the bill authorizes limited placement of trash and recyclable materials in building corridors and exits while awaiting scheduled collection, provided the placement complies with the referenced standards. The bill is designated as an emergency measure and would take effect immediately upon enactment.

Under current law, the State Fire Prevention Commission is charged with adopting and enforcing the State Fire Prevention Code to protect life and property from fire and explosion hazards. This responsibility includes the review and evaluation of proposed code revisions, federal guidelines, and industry standards, as well as the consideration of testimony and stakeholder input. Through this established process, the Commission determines whether modifications are necessary to ensure that adopted standards are appropriate for Maryland's specific needs and conditions.

Senate Bill 621 would significantly disrupt this established process by mandating the adoption of specific code provisions as written, without allowing for the Commission's customary review, analysis, and modification. This approach bypasses the Commission's long-standing evaluative framework and undermines its statutory authority. Historically, the Commission has not been directed by statute to adopt specific regulations without independent review. This interruption of the regulatory process adversely impacts the Commission's ability to fulfill its mandated responsibilities.

This legislation raises serious fire and life safety concerns. Allowing combustible waste and recyclable materials to be placed in protected egress corridors and exits creates significant hazards. These areas serve as primary evacuation routes and critical access points for emergency responders. They are designed to remain clear of combustible contents to allow sufficient time for safe egress. Introducing fuel sources into these spaces increases the risk of fire and smoke development, creates physical obstructions, and impedes both occupant evacuation and first responder operations.

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This legislation also creates regulatory inflexibility by mandating the incorporation of specific sections from a single edition of the NFPA Life Safety Code. Embedding fixed references in statute establishes a rigid framework that may quickly become outdated as model codes evolve to reflect new safety data, technologies, and best practices. Maintaining alignment with current standards would then require repeated legislative action, rather than allowing the Commission to update regulations through its established process.

Residential trash and recyclable materials often contain unknown hazardous contents, including lithium-ion batteries, flammable liquids, and items capable of spontaneous combustion. When placed in egress pathways, these materials increase fire risk and contribute to dangerous fuel loads.

Senate Bill 621 provides no clear enforcement mechanism to limit the volume or duration of material placement, creating ambiguity for inspectors and enforcement personnel. Determining whether materials are temporarily awaiting collection or being improperly stored would place an undue burden on local jurisdictions and complicate compliance efforts. MSP and OSFM believe the bill undermines established regulatory processes, reduces flexibility in fire safety standards, and introduces unacceptable risks to occupant and responder safety.

For these reasons, the Maryland Department of State Police urges the Committee to give Senate Bill 621 an unfavorable report.