



HOWARD COUNTY OFFICE OF COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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Delegate Kumar Barve, Chair
House Environment and Transportation Committee
House Office Building, Room 251
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Testimony **IN SUPPORT** of HB 1052: Public Safety – Gas Piping Systems – Construction Requirements (Flynn and Laird Act)

Dear Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein and Members of the Committee,

I commend Delegate Holmes and Vice Chair Stein for introducing House Bill 1052, the Flynn and Laird Act, in honor Lieutenant Nathan Flynn of Howard County and Battalion Chief Joshua Laird of Frederick County. Both were dedicated firefighters who lost their lives while protecting and serving their respective communities.

A 13-year veteran of the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, Lt. Flynn was our first career firefighter line of duty death on July 23, 2018, leaving behind his wife, Celeste Flynn and their five young children. His passing will be forever felt throughout our community and he remains in our hearts and minds. I commend Mrs. Flynn who has become an outspoken advocate for fire safety and protection and worked with state legislators and Mrs. Laird to craft this critical legislation.

This bill would require new residential and commercial construction with natural gas to utilize piping that is less vulnerable to lightening strikes, which are often the cause of deadly fires. This use of materials is already considered an industry best practice and has been incorporated in many county codes throughout the country, which is why it should be standard across all 24 jurisdictions.

Around the nation and throughout the pandemic, our first responders have faced insurmountable odds. Every day, dedicated firefighters put their lives on the line to protect our communities and this bill is an opportunity to protect them and prevent fires before they start.

House Bill 1052 will elevate the importance of safety-based solutions and we owe it to the lives of our first responders and their families to do so.

I welcome your support and urge a favorable report on HB 1052.

All the Best,

Calvin Ball
Howard County Executive