



TESTIMONY SUPPORTING HB 1086

John Arnold, Deputy Insurance Commissioner

Senate Industry and Business Committee

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Good morning, Chairman Barta and members of the committee. I stand before you today to introduce and ask for your support of HB 1086.

HB 1086 is an agency bill created to address the use of the Reduced Cigarette Ignition Propensity and Firefighter Protection Act enforcement fund. The fund was established in 2009 through HB 1368 during the 61st Legislative Assembly under the Attorney General's Office, where the State Fire Marshal's Office was housed. The purpose of the fund is to support the Fire Marshal in ensuring that cigarette brands are tested to meet specific performance standards designed to reduce the likelihood of a cigarette to cause a fire. This reduces fire hazards, prevents loss of life and property, and is in line with similar programs that are in place in most every other state.

To be in compliance with the program, cigarette manufacturers must initially test, then retest each brand to be sold in the state every three years. Along with the application packet documenting the testing and results, the companies must submit a \$250.00 fee for each cigarette brand. The State Fire Marshal's Office is required to report the findings and results of this program to the Interim Health Committee every interim session. The fees collected are currently deposited into a separate fund that is used for purchasing testing supplies, equipment to aid in carrying out the program, and the salary and benefits of the Administrative Assistant when processing these application certifications. Currently, we have spent approximately \$11,072 for the biennium. The fund has received \$102,500 in fees this biennium, and the fund has a current balance of approximately \$494,611.

The State Fire Marshal's Office exists to protect public safety by enforcing laws that prevent fires, ensure safe handling of dangerous materials, maintain fire safety infrastructure, investigate fires, and educate the public about fire risks and prevention. The Fire Marshal's role is essential in promoting fire safety and reducing risk and loss of life and property due to fires. We believe this proposed language change will provide greater flexibility in utilizing the funds by eliminating the need for overly specific restrictions. The State Fire Marshal's Office will continue to fulfill the original purpose of the fund, ensuring its intended objectives are met while allowing for more efficient use of resources.

Chairman Barta, members of the committee, I respectfully request your support with a do pass recommendation on HB 1086. Thank you for your time and I am happy to answer any questions.