



TESTIMONY

Doug Nelson, State Fire Marshal

House Industry, Business and Labor Committee

January 8, 2025

Good Morning Chairman Warrey and members of the House Industry, Business and Labor Committee. For the record, my name is Doug Nelson, State Fire Marshal. I stand before you today in support of House Bill 1086, which is an agency bill created to address the use of the reduced cigarette ignition propensity and firefighter protection act enforcement fund and hopefully not over complicate a very simple bill.

To provide some background, this fund was established in 2009 through HB 1368 under the Attorney General's Office, where the Fire Marshal Division was housed until last session. 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 fire hazards and prevent loss of life and property. Cigarette manufacturers must comply with these standards and contribute to the fund every three years.

HB 1086 expands the allowable uses of the fund to include Fire Marshal-related expenditures beyond the currently specified activities. Currently, the fund is primarily used for purchasing testing supplies, such as cigarettes and hairspray (totaling approximately \$11 for the biennium), as well as covering the salary and benefits of the Administrative Assistant when processing certifications (totaling approximately \$10,117 for the biennium). In comparison, the fund has received \$71,250 in fees during this biennium, with a current cash balance of \$464,303.

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. Their role is essential in promoting fire safety and reducing the loss of life and property due to fires. We believe this proposed language change will provide greater flexibility in utilizing the funds, eliminating the need for overly specific restrictions. The 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 Warrey and members of the committee, I respectfully request a Do Pass recommendation, and am happy to answer any questions that you may have.