

Subject: PUBLIC COMMENT File 251100 Supporting MFD budget request as original unamended

Joseph DUNCAN
Milwaukee, WI 53208-2721
ALDERMAN BURGELIS,

&

The Great 10th District of Milwaukee Alderwoman MOORE,

Thank you, Alderman Burgelis, and members of the Public Safety committee, for this file and you sir for outlining the safety concerns in your introduction. I share many of these concerns in my comments on the 2026 Mayor's Budget outline below.

In Summer 2023, Alderman Murphy and Fire Chief Lipski went door-to-door in Martin Drive to distribute smoke alarms. That outreach was urgent and necessary: in just six months, our neighborhood saw seven fires. The last one—at 43rd and Martin Drive—was the worst. One of those fires was caused when We Energies failed to maintain its infrastructure, igniting a home. We are now in Branch 22, forcing the Public Service Commission to uphold its mission to protect all Wisconsinites.

Community advocate and property owner Pat Mueller puts it plainly:

“When you find yourself in a situation where you cannot get insurance on your home, or your rental property, even though you never had a claim, you will take this seriously.”

Insurance rates for multiple units within Martin Drive, their insurance jumped 400%—from \$12,000 to \$60,000 per year. That is no joke. It is a very stressful experience.

CLUE (Comprehensive Loss Underwriting Exchange) uses these risk assessments to determine insurance costs by ZIP code. When infrastructure fails and fire risk rises, entire neighborhoods pay the price—whether or not they've ever filed a claim.

Excerpt from my public comment...

Missing Support for Public Safety and Healthy Neighborhoods

The Milwaukee Fire Department's budget must reflect future realities, not outdated assumptions. Budgets should anticipate risk before it becomes tragedy, replace equipment before it fails, and fund departments based on evolving needs.

Milwaukee's fire crews are responding to high-rise emergencies with ladder trucks that no longer meet UL safety ratings, putting lives at risk. Downtown is no longer a commuter-only zone; it now houses families, seniors, and working-class residents. Infrastructure must reflect this shift. These high-rise

buildings now contain stoves, ovens, space heaters, and lithium-ion battery-powered electronics—each increasing ignition sources, thermal load, and vertical risk. Fire crews must navigate not just height, but heat, voltage, and volatility stacked floor by floor.

Thank you for protecting residence in the City of Milwaukee.

Joe DUNCAN

CC: Committee Staff Assistant, public comment