



Senate Bill 235

Major Information Technology Development Project Fund – Use of Funds

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: March 24, 2021

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 235 as it seeks to ensure the ongoing success of the Statewide Public Interoperability Radio System (MD FiRST) and the advancement of public safety communications across the state.

In 2010, county governments partnered with the State to build an interoperable radio system for first responders to use statewide in an emergency. Several county public safety agencies are realizing the benefits of joining MD FiRST, including the ability to coordinate emergency operations across jurisdictional lines.

Counties appreciate efforts to support and enhance MD FiRST, as it continues to make public safety communications both more inclusive and more effective, particularly in western Maryland and on the Eastern Shore, and serves as a critical link for state and local volunteer emergency responders.

SB 235 expands the purpose of the Major Information Technology Development Project Fund (MITDPF) to require funding for MD FiRST. In order for a project to be eligible for funding through the MITDPF – which is used to pay for major IT development projects across state agencies – it must cost at least \$1 million and generally support critical business functions associated with the public health, education, safety, or financial well-being of Maryland residents.

SB 235 provides much needed resources to ensure effective, reliable emergency communications and data sharing across the state, enhancing public safety in Maryland and in our local communities. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 235.