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March 4, 2021

Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: SB 822 - Public Safety - Maryland Emergency Management
Agency - Office of Resilience**

Dear Chairman Pinsky,

I write to share information on the above referenced Senate bill, which would establish the Office of Resilience within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The Office would be responsible for “leveraging federal and private building partnerships with public, private, and non-governmental organizations in all stages of emergency planning and management.” The Office would also be responsible, in coordination with the Department of the Environment to administer the National Flood Insurance Program.

MEMA has both experience and institutional expertise in the broader topic of resilience, and would be well-situated to house this office. MEMA is an expert agency at multi-agency coordination for both acute and longer-term issues, having successfully coordinated similar efforts that require input across stakeholder groups. In addition to MEMA’s ability to coordinate complex problem resolution, MEMA also already works directly with resilience actions. Through MEMA’s Hazard Mitigation efforts, the staff has worked closely with public and private sector partners to ensure the resiliency of our public and private infrastructure. In particular, MEMA played a large role, in coordination with Howard County, to engage in resilience efforts following the Ellicott City floods of 2016 and 2018.

While MEMA staff are well-versed in issues related to resilience, the agency is not equipped to operate this Office at current staffing levels. MEMA would require additional resources to run this new office, as outlined in the bill’s Fiscal Note. It is our hope that this information will be heavily weighted as the Committee considers SB822.

Thank you for your support of the Maryland Military Department. We would be happy to provide any additional information if required. Please feel free to reach out by e-mail catherine.a.kelly26.nfg@mail.mil or by phone 410-446-5390.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Kelly

Catherine A. Kelly
Director, Legislative and Government Affairs