



The Senate of Maryland

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

To Chairman Pinsky, Vice-Chair Kagan, and the members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee:

The City of Bowie is vulnerable to many hazards, ranging from severe weather-related events to technological and man-made incidents. By charter, the City of Bowie is responsible for ensuring the public safety and welfare of its communities. The duties of responding to and recovering from incidents, no matter how large, begin and end at the local level. Thus, emergency management operations, including those operations before, during, and after an incident, is a core obligation of the City.

The City of Bowie has a population of over 58,000, which is the fifth largest city in Maryland and is larger in population than eight counties. The City appoints a full-time Director of Emergency Management, who oversees an all-encompassing emergency management program, taking an all-hazards approach. During a critical incident response, the Director of Emergency Management is responsible for providing overall coordination and support to the on-scene incident command, coordinating the dissemination of warnings and emergency public information, maintaining situational awareness, and other duties. One of the most important functions of the Director of Emergency Management during an incident is to coordinate critically needed resources to appropriately manage that incident.

During an emergency, vital resources sometimes exceed those that are available at the local level. The City of Bowie may request additional needed resources from Prince George's County. However, at times, the City of Bowie and Prince George's County may be competing for the same limited resources if the incident involves both jurisdictions.

The purpose of the Maryland Emergency Management Assistance Compact (MEMAC) is to provide for emergency management mutual assistance between jurisdictions that are part of the Compact during critical incidents. It allows any jurisdiction in Maryland to request and receive assets from another Maryland jurisdiction through the coordination of the Maryland Department of Emergency Management. As part of this process, parties collaborate on requesting procedures, and financial and liability issues. It also provides for mutual cooperation in emergency management related exercises, testing, and other training activities.

Currently, all 23 Maryland counties, the City of Baltimore, the City of Annapolis, the City of Ocean City, and the City of Laurel directly benefit from the Maryland Emergency Management Assistance Compact (MEMAC). Requests are made to the State through the State Emergency Operations Center, when activated, or the Maryland Joint Operations Center, which is staffed 24

hours a day, 7 days a week. All members of the Compact have an appointed Director of Emergency Management and a fully operating emergency management program as does the City of Bowie. The only other municipalities within the State with full time Directors and programs that are not part of the Compact are the City of Bowie and the City of Rockville.

During an emergency incident, the City of Bowie must ensure critical resources can be obtained when needed. Allowing the City to become a member of this Compact would guarantee that would occur.

For these reasons, I respectfully ask for a favorable report on SB 932.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron L. Watson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "W".

Senator Ron Watson

Legislative District 23