



## **Maryland Emergency Management Association**

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State of Maryland House of Delegates Health and Government Operations Committee  
Room 241  
House of Delegates Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Madam Chair Pendegrass and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Emergency Management Association I am pleased to offer our support to House Bill 650 - Governor Declarations. We believe this is an important step in advancing emergency management policy in Maryland and fully support the Maryland Emergency Management Agency's desire to apply a logical solution to a challenging issue which has plagued Maryland's emergency managers.

The Maryland Emergency Management Association promotes and supports an all-hazards approach to Emergency Management in the State of Maryland. Originally formed in 1986 as the Maryland Emergency Management and Civil Defense Association, the organization was formed to promote and support adequate Emergency Management and Civil Defense in the State of Maryland; coordinate the efforts of all members in a common front to protect the lives and property of all persons within the State against natural or man-made disasters or enemy action; to evaluate and disseminate the common experience and collective judgment of those specialists trained in and responsible for Emergency Management and Civil Defense activities; serve as a clearing house for ideas, suggestions and courses of action between members; and to act in concert with and in a professional advisory capacity to other organizations regarding Emergency Management and Civil Defense. Today the organization, with almost 100 members, continues to promote Emergency Management efforts across the State of Maryland. The Association welcomes local Emergency Management staff as well as Professional/Technical and Corporate Memberships. We encourage continued involvement from our retired members offering them lifetime membership and participation in Association activities.

Emergency managers often make challenging decisions with limited and incomplete information. One such decision, recommending chief elected official declares a state of emergency, is often made before a hazard impacts Maryland or even the region. This is problematic as forecasts change and when officials declare a state of emergency before impact, officials run the risk of damaging credibility and the public not heeding warnings for subsequent events. Despite this risk, emergency managers rely on the state of emergency to pre-position critical supplies days before impact. This, balanced with the hesitancy to needlessly alarm the public, is challenging and places elected officials in a difficult situation.

House Bill 650 proposes an innovative solution to this problem, by creating a mechanism (enhanced coordination order) that carries with it the same legal implications as a state of emergency while avoiding unnecessary worry for the public by using the words "state of emergency." This will allow MEMA to support the needs of local communities by forward deploying the assets we need to effectively protect Maryland communities.

In summary, the Maryland Emergency Management Association supports House Bill 650. This bill proposes a simple, reasonable solution to a challenge that local emergency managers in the lead up to disasters.

Sincerely,



Joseph Theobald  
President, Maryland Emergency Management Association