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February 2, 2021

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: SB0069 – Maryland Emergency Management Agency - Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office - Establishment– **Letter of Information**

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The Office of the Attorney General tenders this letter of information on SB 69.

Senate Bill 69 establishes and staffs a new Cyber Coordination and Operations Office (“CCOO”) within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (“MEMA”) to prepare political subdivisions, school boards, and agencies against cybersecurity attacks. If enacted, the legislation would help these entities to develop cyber disruption plans, implement cyber best practices, coordinate with the Department of Information and Technology (“DoIT”) on the implementation of the State Master Plan, and connect these entities with resources in consultation with DoIT. Also, SB 69 instructs the CCOO to provide technical assistance to these entities, provide risk assessments, develop score cards and reports on readiness, and include these entities in cyber exercises that the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (“MEMA”) conducts with DoIT, the National Guard, and other agencies.

Senate Bill 69 views cyber events as potentially having the same catastrophic effects as floods, wildfires, or other natural events. The bill will leverage the natural convening power and existing relationships that MEMA has with other State agencies and with local units of government. The bill will also provide additional resources to MEMA to execute this new mission.

The Office also recommends this Committee consider North Dakota Senate Bill No. 2110<sup>1</sup> as a reference on how Maryland should enlarge DoIT's role with respect to the other branches of State government as well as local governments and the public university system.<sup>2</sup>

In sum, SB 69 provides an active support to prepare against cybersecurity attacks through MEMA and DoIT coordination.

cc: Committee Members

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<sup>1</sup> See generally S.B. 2110 (N.D. Jan. 3, 2019), <https://www.legis.nd.gov/assembly/66-2019/documents/19-8091-04000.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> See MD. CYBERSECURITY COUNS., MARYLAND CYBERSECURITY COUNCIL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2017 - 2019, 26 (July 1, 2019), <https://www.umgc.edu/documents/upload/maryland-cybersecurity-council-activities-report-2017-2019.pdf>.