

**FAV - MDEM - SB650 - State Disaster Relief Fund -**

Uploaded by: Anna Sierra

Position: FAV



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Arundell Spivey  
Russell J. Strickland  
Secretary

**FAVORABLE - SB0650**  
**Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund**

Maryland Department of Emergency Management  
Appropriations Committee  
Hearing Date: 4 APR 2023

Chairman Ben Barnes  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Barnes,

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes **in support of SB 0650 - State Disaster Recovery Fund**. The bill establishes a disaster recovery fund to be administered by the Department, and it will fill a critical gap in Maryland's disaster recovery capabilities. The bill will also enable MDEM to establish much-needed minimum reporting criteria to gather disaster-related impact data, which will not only support ongoing disaster relief and recovery efforts, but will also support decision makers in areas of disaster risk reduction like hazard mitigation. This bill directly reflects the recommendations of a comprehensive [State Disaster Relief Fund Working Group](#), which met over the course of several months in 2022 and studied various models for non-federal disaster assistance programs, as well as heard from recent disaster survivors.

The only mechanism in State law which currently addresses disaster recovery funding is the Catastrophic Event Account, which is not currently managed by MDEM or any other State agency. **The CEA is not an effective or efficient mechanism to support disaster relief and recovery operations in the absence of a federal disaster declaration.** The CEA, even as amended by the House in HB789, will not:



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Arundell  
Russell J. Strickland  
Secretary

- Provide an efficient or coordinated mechanism for state disaster recovery support for local jurisdictions, residents, or business owners. The Catastrophic Event Account is not managed or directed by MDEM or any other State agency. Only the Governor has the power to transfer funds from the CEA to existing State programs, or under the amended version, to local units of government. This requires a budget transfer process and a 15 day review by the Legislative Policy Committee.
- Provide an equitable disaster relief and recovery program available to residents, as there are no standards identified for which types of disasters are eligible for funding and what type of aid should be provided. These criteria would be required by the SDRF.
- Eliminate inconsistencies in disaster relief and recovery funding provided, as it will remain up to the Governor which event is worthy of funding, how much funding is provided, and which State or local programs are funded.

**Simply put: our current disaster relief policy leaves many of our neighbors behind.**

It should also be noted that using the CEA out of sequence from federal disaster funding requirements could limit eligibility for disaster assistance for Marylanders and local governments. SB650 specifically charges MDEM with ensuring the Fund is used in accordance with the federal requirements.

As written, SB650 has the potential to fill significant gaps in disaster relief and recovery capabilities at the State and local levels. If the CEA is eliminated, and the SDRF is established, the State does not lose any capability to respond to disasters. Instead, the SDRF provides MDEM the ability to coordinate a statewide disaster recovery effort, addressing individual, business, and local government needs when the jurisdictions themselves are overwhelmed in an efficient, effective, and coordinated manner immediately following the response. **When combined with a risk reduction strategy that invests in hazard mitigation for our communities, SB0650 will significantly increase Maryland's resilience in the face of local disasters.**

**In conclusion, MDEM urges a favorable report of SB 0650 - State Disaster Recovery Fund without any further amendment.**



Wes Moore  
Governor  
Arundell  
Russell J. Strickland  
Secretary

If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison:  
[anna.sierra1@maryland.gov](mailto:anna.sierra1@maryland.gov).

**SB 650 - FAV - MML.pdf**

Uploaded by: Justin Fiore

Position: FAV



Maryland Municipal League  
*The Association of Maryland's Cities and Towns*

TESTIMONY

April 4, 2023

**Committee:** House Appropriation Committee

**Bill:** SB 650 – Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund

**Position:** Support

**Reason for Position:**

The Maryland Municipal League supports SB 650, which would establish the State Disaster Recovery Fund to support local communities when disasters strike but a federal disaster declaration has not been received or fails to meet the local need.

The League appreciates the sponsor's leadership on this multiyear effort to fill the gaps in emergency funding that can occur after a natural disaster, especially in our most vulnerable communities. This is poised to be an important tool for local governments, families, and businesses. Our Hometown Emergency Preparedness Ad Hoc Committee also fully supports the legislation.

The Maryland Municipal League respectfully requests the Committee provide SB 650 with a favorable report.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

Theresa Kuhns

Angelica Bailey Thupari, Esq.

Bill Jorch

Justin Fiore

Chief Executive Officer

Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

Director, Public Policy

Deputy Director, Advocacy & Public Affairs

1212 West Street, Annapolis, Maryland 21401

410-268-5514 | 800-492-7121 | FAX: 410-268-7004 | [www.mdmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmunicipal.org)

# **Anne Arundel County - Office of Emergency Manageme**

Uploaded by: Kevin J Simmons

Position: FAV



**City of Annapolis**  
**Office of Emergency Management**  
Director Kevin J Simmons  
199 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Anne Arundel County**  
**Office of Emergency Management**  
Director Preeti Emrick  
7480 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard  
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21060



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**In Support of MD 2023 SB 650 as Amended**  
**Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund Bill**  
*House Appropriations Committee*

March 23, 2023

Chairman Ben Barnes  
Vice-Chairman Mark Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Barnes and Vice-Chairman Chang:

As the local emergency managers for the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, and co-chairs of the State Disaster Relief Fund Workgroup pursuant to Senate Bill 310/Chapter 491 and House Bill 386/Chapter 490 of 2022, we write to you today to urge your committee's support in adopting the amended version of Senate Bill 650 as referred to the House Appropriations Committee and to forego amendments made to House Bill 789 as it currently stands.

The current amended version of the HB789 presents significant concerns for local emergency managers as it does not adequately fill the gaps identified by the State Disaster Relief Fund Working Group in its recommendations to the Maryland General Assembly. It is the recommendation of the Workgroup to create a unified state approach to disaster relief that can provide quick access to funding for existing state disaster relief programs and to provide a mechanism for direct assistance to individuals suffering from the impacts of local disasters. Additionally, HB789, as currently amended, does not identify any policy, thresholds, or access procedures for requesting or granting funding from the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) for relief efforts by either State agencies or local units of government like the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County.

The City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, along with other counties and municipalities throughout the state, may be adversely affected by the amended version of HB789 in that the proposed amendment does not leverage a coordinated, statewide recovery effort but rather increases the possibility for more patchworked recovery and may even perpetuate divisions and inconsistencies among jurisdictions that will result in even slower response times or more limited access to assistance by those most in need.

The amended version of the HB789 could also limit the City of Annapolis' and Anne Arundel County's eligibility for federal disaster assistance if CEA funds were used out of sequence from federal disaster funding requirements. Having the Fund administered by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management in conjunction with the local emergency managers helps to ensure all funding requirements are properly adhered to



and that industry experts in emergency management and disaster recovery are able to establish the policies and procedures needed to get assistance to impacted communities as efficiently and equitably as possible.

It has been a year and six months since the devastating EF-2 tornado struck the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and many residents are still trying to recover from the impacts to their homes and businesses due to a failed recovery system. Many of these residents live on fixed incomes, have low incomes, or reside in generational housing and are unable to absorb the impacts caused by such disasters. The establishment of the State Disaster Recovery Fund in lieu of the Catastrophic Event Account would help to ensure our more vulnerable populations would have access to more timely and efficient recovery assistance that the CEA is unable to provide even with the proposed changes. Simply put, the CEA is not an effective or efficient mechanism to support disaster relief and recovery operations in Maryland and there is much need for the State Disaster Recovery Fund which establishes both a program and policy to better implement disaster recovery initiatives across the state.

We respectfully request that the Appropriations Committee take into consideration these concerns and move forward with the establishment of the State Disaster Recovery Fund as the primary mechanism for state funded disaster recovery in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Simmons  
Director, Office of Emergency Management  
City of Annapolis, Maryland

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*Preeti Emrick*  
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Preeti Emrick  
Director, Office of Emergency Management  
Anne Arundel County, Maryland

**SB0650-APP\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Kevin Kinnally

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 650**

### *Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: April 4, 2023

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 650. By implementing the recommendations of the State Disaster Recovery Fund Workgroup, this bill will help counties streamline and expedite community resources in times of crisis.

While a disaster always begins and ends at the local level, a strong partnership among federal, state, and local governments is vital to emergency preparedness and community resilience. Currently, a federal emergency declaration is the trigger event for a wide range of public and private sector relief available in a crisis or disaster. However, in smaller scale events, similar problems arise for those affected – but local governments are restricted in the funds and resources they can activate without federal declaration.

In lieu of federal assistance, county governments and their residents rely on state relief programs. However, Maryland’s current relief mechanisms are siloed, mostly unfunded programs, which create barriers to access and significant delays in distributing aid. As such, SB 650 establishes a State Disaster Recovery Fund, administered by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), to provide disaster recovery assistance to county governments, individuals, and families when federal aid is not available or insufficient – typically due to the nature and breadth of the event.

Specifically, the State Disaster Recovery Fund will provide disaster recovery assistance to county governments for the repair, restoration, reconstruction, or replacement of a public facility, expedite low-interest or no-interest loans to businesses and nonprofits, allocate disaster-related assistance for unmet needs of individuals and families following a federal disaster declaration, and other needed assistance, as specified.

Furthermore, beginning in fiscal year 2025 and each year thereafter, the bill requires the governor to include a sufficient appropriation in the annual budget bill to bring the minimum balance of the fund to at least \$20 million. In addition, MDEM, in consultation with local emergency managers, must develop eligibility criteria, policies, and procedures to administer the fund, while considering existing state disaster recovery programs and federal disaster relief and recovery requirements.

SB 650 provides much-needed resources to serve residents and businesses in all 24 jurisdictions when a disaster strikes, and the help is most needed. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 650.

**MDEMA Testimony for SB0650.pdf**

Uploaded by: Maryland Emergency Management Association

Position: FAV



# **Maryland Emergency Management Association**

c/o Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security  
100 Edison Park Drive, 1S31, Gaithersburg, MD 20878  
[www.marylandema.org](http://www.marylandema.org)

Joseph Theobald, *President*    Jo Henderson, *Vice President*    Shelly Gooding, *Secretary*    Marianne Souders, *Treasurer*

March 30, 2023

## **Re: SUPPORT – SB0650 as Amended – State Disaster Recovery Fund**

The Maryland Emergency Management Association (MDEMA) is a non-profit organization that brings together emergency management professionals from across Maryland to improve the state's emergency preparedness and response capabilities. MDEMA serves as a forum for emergency managers to share best practices, discuss emerging issues and trends, and collaborate on planning and response efforts.

***The Maryland Emergency Management Association strongly supports Maryland SB0650 in its amended form.*** SB0650 would establish the State Disaster Recovery Fund to provide disaster-related assistance to local governments, individuals, families, and businesses in the event of a disaster. The creation of such a fund was the result of careful study and consideration by the State Disaster Relief Fund Working Group commissioned over the Summer of 2022.

The establishment of a Maryland State Disaster Recovery Fund will provide a critical source of support for Maryland communities. In the absence or denial of federal declaration and assistance, the State Disaster Recovery Fund will be able to provide assistance for the unmet needs of individuals and families in a ***timely manner***. The fund will enable the state to provide disaster-related assistance to local governments for the repair or replacement of public facilities, as well as low-interest or no-interest loans to businesses and nonprofits. This support is essential for these entities to ***respond to disasters, resume normal operations, expedite recovery efforts, and mitigate the long-term impacts of disasters quickly and effectively.***

By creating this fund, ***Maryland will become one of many other jurisdictions that have identified this disaster response gap*** and proactively chose to act on it, such as California's Disaster Assistance Act, Texas' Disaster Relief Fund, New York State Disaster Relief Fund, Virginia Disaster Relief Fund, and Florida's Disaster Fund. These are just a few examples of jurisdictions that have disaster relief funds. Many other states and local governments also have similar funds in place to help those affected by disasters and emergencies.

While Maryland has received federal disaster aid for several major disasters in the past, there have been ***instances where federal funds were not available***, such as the Ellicott City Floods in



## **Maryland Emergency Management Association**

c/o Montgomery County Office of Emergency Management and Homeland Security  
100 Edison Park Drive, 1S31, Gaithersburg, MD 20878

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Joseph Theobald, *President*    Jo Henderson, *Vice President*    Shelly Gooding, *Secretary*    Marianne Souders, *Treasurer*

2016 and 2018<sup>1</sup>, Baltimore Gas Explosion in 2020<sup>2</sup>; Hail Storm in Frederick in 2020<sup>3</sup>. These incidents highlight the need for Maryland to have a state disaster relief fund in place that can help provide the financial assistance to individuals and communities when Federal funding is not available.

***Finally, we support the establishment of a State Disaster Recovery Fund over the utilization of the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) as proposed in the amended version of HB789.***

Unfortunately, the use of the CEA as an alternative funding source does not adequately meet the needs of Maryland's residents as identified by the State Disaster Relief Fund Working Group in its report to the Maryland General Assembly. The use of the CEA for the relief effort specified above is likely to result in inefficient, delayed, or inconsistent application of disaster relief funding and delivery across the State.

Disaster assistance plays a critical role in promoting recovery, addressing immediate needs, and mitigating the long-term impacts of disasters. It is an essential component of disaster relief efforts and can help promote the rapid recovery of life, economy, and the environment.

We respectfully request a **favorable report on SB 0650.**

Netta Squires and Jon Bratt

Co-Chairs MDEMA Legislative Committee

On behalf of the Maryland Emergency Management Association

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<sup>1</sup> Ellicott City, Maryland, experienced severe flash floods in 2016 and 2018 that caused significant damage to businesses and homes. While the state of Maryland provided financial assistance to those affected, a federal disaster declaration was not issued, and federal funds were not available.

<sup>2</sup> In August 2020, a gas explosion occurred in Baltimore that destroyed several homes and damaged others. While the state of Maryland provided financial assistance to those affected, a federal disaster declaration was not issued, and federal funds were not available.

<sup>3</sup> In June 2020, a severe hail storm hit Frederick, Maryland, causing significant damage to homes, cars, and businesses. While the state of Maryland provided financial assistance to those affected, a federal disaster declaration was not issued, and federal funds were not available.

# **Letter of Support - SB650**

Uploaded by: Michael Hinson

Position: FAV



COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGERS AFFILIATE

**LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 650 AS AMENDED**  
**PUBLIC SAFETY – STATE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND BILL**  
**HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**

**MARCH 27, 2023**

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Emergency Managers (EM) Affiliate **SUPPORTS** the amended version of SB 650 – Public Safety – State Disaster Recovery Fund Bill and urges the committee to forgo the amendments made to HB 789 - Catastrophic Event Account - Unit of Local Government - Authorized Fund.

Over the course of five months in 2022, the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) Workgroup met to study and make recommendations regarding the efficacy and efficiency of the State’s disaster relief funding capability. The Workgroup evaluated national best practices, analyzed lessons learned from state agencies and subject matter experts, and listened to the lived experiences of recent disaster survivor residents of the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. A concerted effort was made to ensure that when making recommendations to inform bill drafting, the priorities identified by the Workgroup would be reflected. Accordingly, the amended SB 650 incorporates these recommendations, and as a result, reflects the vision of the bill that the EM Affiliates support.

The differences between the Senate bill and the amended House bill are cause for concern. The amended version of HB 789 does not fill any of the gaps identified by the SDRF Workgroup, such as: creating a unified state approach to disaster relief; identifying any policy, thresholds, or access procedures for requesting or granting funding from the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) for relief efforts by either State agencies or local governments; providing quick access to funding for existing state disaster relief programs to be available to Marylanders in the wake of a disaster; identifying critical data collection requirements to enable State and local governments to quantify non-federal disaster impacts; or providing a mechanism for direct assistance to individuals suffering from the impacts of disasters.

Additionally, as it is written, the amended version of the House bill will put the onus on local governments to establish, implement, and maintain a local disaster recovery program rather than be able to leverage a coordinated, statewide effort. Furthermore, whereas the original version of HB 789 would establish a state-managed fund with policies and procedures to manage and disburse the fund equitably, in the amended version, local governments will have to bear this burden – in addition to their own recovery efforts – without any specified support from the State.




The amended House bill will create inequities in how Marylanders across the State recover from disasters by perpetuating divisions and inconsistencies across State disaster relief programs, resulting in slow response times and limited assistance for those who are most in need and least able to absorb the impacts of disasters.

Notably, the SDRF that would be established through SB 650, as amended, provides Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) the ability to coordinate a statewide disaster recovery effort, addressing individual, business, and local government needs when the jurisdictions are themselves overwhelmed. However, the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) is not managed or directed by MDEM or any other State agency. Only the Governor has the power to transfer funds from the CEA to existing State programs, or under the amended House version, to local units of government. This requires a budget transfer process and a 15-day review by the Legislative Policy Committee. Moreover, using the CEA out of sequence from federal disaster funding requirements could limit eligibility for disaster assistance for Marylanders and local governments. The SDRF is the most efficient and effective mechanism to put in place to ensure that the need for robust disaster relief and recovery operations in Maryland is met.

For the foregoing reasons, MACo Emergency Managers Affiliate unanimously supports the Senate version of the bill and respectfully urge the committee to **SUPPORT SB 650**, as amended.

Respectfully,

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Michael Hinson, MPA, CEM, CBCP  
President, Maryland Association of County Emergency Managers  
Director, Howard County Office of Emergency Management

**Joint\_Letter\_of\_Support\_for\_SB\_650\_as\_amended.pdf**

Uploaded by: Preeti Emrick

Position: FAV



**City of Annapolis**  
**Office of Emergency Management**  
Director Kevin J Simmons  
199 Taylor Avenue  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Anne Arundel County**  
**Office of Emergency Management**  
Director Preeti Emrick  
7480 Baltimore Annapolis Boulevard  
Glen Burnie, Maryland 21060



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**In Support of MD 2023 SB 650 as Amended**  
**Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund Bill**  
*House Appropriations Committee*

March 23, 2023

Chairman Ben Barnes  
Vice-Chairman Mark Chang  
Appropriations Committee  
Room 121  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Chairman Barnes and Vice-Chairman Chang:

As the local emergency managers for the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, and co-chairs of the State Disaster Relief Fund Workgroup pursuant to Senate Bill 310/Chapter 491 and House Bill 386/Chapter 490 of 2022, we write to you today to urge your committee's support in adopting the amended version of Senate Bill 650 as referred to the House Appropriations Committee and to forego amendments made to House Bill 789 as it currently stands.

The current amended version of the HB789 presents significant concerns for local emergency managers as it does not adequately fill the gaps identified by the State Disaster Relief Fund Working Group in its recommendations to the Maryland General Assembly. It is the recommendation of the Workgroup to create a unified state approach to disaster relief that can provide quick access to funding for existing state disaster relief programs and to provide a mechanism for direct assistance to individuals suffering from the impacts of local disasters. Additionally, HB789, as currently amended, does not identify any policy, thresholds, or access procedures for requesting or granting funding from the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) for relief efforts by either State agencies or local units of government like the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County.

The City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, along with other counties and municipalities throughout the state, may be adversely affected by the amended version of HB789 in that the proposed amendment does not leverage a coordinated, statewide recovery effort but rather increases the possibility for more patchworked recovery and may even perpetuate divisions and inconsistencies among jurisdictions that will result in even slower response times or more limited access to assistance by those most in need.

The amended version of the HB789 could also limit the City of Annapolis' and Anne Arundel County's eligibility for federal disaster assistance if CEA funds were used out of sequence from federal disaster funding requirements. Having the Fund administered by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management in conjunction with the local emergency managers helps to ensure all funding requirements are properly adhered to

and that industry experts in emergency management and disaster recovery are able to establish the policies and procedures needed to get assistance to impacted communities as efficiently and equitably as possible.

It has been a year and six months since the devastating EF-2 tornado struck the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County and many residents are still trying to recover from the impacts to their homes and businesses due to a failed recovery system. Many of these residents live on fixed incomes, have low incomes, or reside in generational housing and are unable to absorb the impacts caused by such disasters. The establishment of the State Disaster Recovery Fund in lieu of the Catastrophic Event Account would help to ensure our more vulnerable populations would have access to more timely and efficient recovery assistance that the CEA is unable to provide even with the proposed changes. Simply put, the CEA is not an effective or efficient mechanism to support disaster relief and recovery operations in Maryland and there is much need for the State Disaster Recovery Fund which establishes both a program and policy to better implement disaster recovery initiatives across the state.

We respectfully request that the Appropriations Committee take into consideration these concerns and move forward with the establishment of the State Disaster Recovery Fund as the primary mechanism for state funded disaster recovery in Maryland.

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Simmons  
Director, Office of Emergency Management  
City of Annapolis, Maryland

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*Preeti Emrick*  
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Preeti Emrick  
Director, Office of Emergency Management  
Anne Arundel County, Maryland

**Support Amended SB650 SDRF Mar31 2023.pdf**

Uploaded by: Preeti Emrick

Position: FAV



LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 650 AS AMENDED  
PUBLIC SAFETY – STATE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND BILL  
HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 31, 2023

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Emergency Managers (EM) Affiliate **SUPPORTS** the amended version of SB 650 – Public Safety – State Disaster Recovery Fund Bill and urges the committee to forgo the amendments made to HB 789 - Catastrophic Event Account - Unit of Local Government - Authorized Fund.

Over the course of five months in 2022, the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) Workgroup met to study and make recommendations regarding the efficacy and efficiency of the State’s disaster relief funding capability. The Workgroup evaluated national best practices, analyzed lessons learned from state agencies and subject matter experts, and listened to the lived experiences of recent disaster survivor residents of the City of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County. A concerted effort was made to ensure that when making recommendations to inform bill drafting, the priorities identified by the Workgroup would be reflected. **Accordingly, the amended SB 650 incorporates these recommendations, and as a result, reflects the vision of the bill that the EM Affiliates support.**

**The differences between the Senate bill and the amended House bill are cause for concern.** The amended version of HB 789 does not fill any of the gaps identified by the SDRF Workgroup, such as: creating a unified state approach to disaster relief; identifying any policy, thresholds, or access procedures for requesting or granting funding from the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) for relief efforts by either State agencies or local governments; providing quick access to funding for existing state disaster relief programs to be available to Marylanders in the wake of a disaster; identifying critical data collection requirements to enable State and local governments to quantify non-federal disaster impacts; or providing a mechanism for direct assistance to individuals suffering from the impacts of disasters.

Additionally, as it is written, the amended version of the House bill will put the onus on local governments to establish, implement, and maintain a local disaster recovery program rather than be able to leverage a coordinated, statewide effort. Furthermore, whereas the original version of HB 789 would establish a state-managed fund with policies and procedures to manage and disburse the fund equitably, in the amended version, local governments will have to bear this burden – in addition to their own recovery efforts – without any specified support from the State.

The amended House bill will create inequities in how Marylanders across the State recover from disasters by perpetuating divisions and inconsistencies across State disaster relief programs, resulting in slow response times and limited assistance for those who are most in need and least able to absorb the impacts of disasters.

Notably, the SDRF that would be established through SB 650, as amended, provides Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) the ability to coordinate a statewide disaster recovery effort, addressing individual, business, and local government needs when the jurisdictions are themselves overwhelmed. However, the Catastrophic Event Account (CEA) is not managed or directed by MDEM or any other State agency. Only the Governor has the power to transfer funds from the CEA to existing State programs, or under the amended House version, to local units of government. This requires a budget transfer process and a 15-day review by the Legislative Policy Committee. Moreover, using the CEA out of sequence from federal disaster funding requirements could limit eligibility for disaster assistance for Marylanders and local governments. The SDRF is the most efficient and effective mechanism to put in place to ensure that the need for robust disaster relief and recovery operations in Maryland is met.

For the foregoing reasons, MACo Emergency Managers Affiliate unanimously supports the Senate version of the bill and respectfully urge the committee to **SUPPORT SB 650**, as amended.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:  
*Preeti Emrick*  
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Preeti Emrick, JD, CHEC  
Acting President, Maryland Association of County Emergency Managers  
Director, Anne Arundel County Office of Emergency Management

**Anne Arundel County \_FAV\_SB 650.pdf**

Uploaded by: Steuart Pittman

Position: FAV





April 4, 2023

**Senate Bill 650**

**Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund**

**House Appropriations Committee**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 650 - Public Safety - State Disaster Recovery Fund. This bill will establish the State Disaster Recovery Fund to provide disaster related assistance to fill gaps when federal assistance is unavailable. This bill is the result of legislation passed last year to create the Workgroup to Study the Establishment of a State Disaster Relief Fund, which was co-chaired by Anne Arundel County's Director of Emergency Management.

On September 1, 2021, Tropical Depression Ida hit Anne Arundel County and significantly impacted over one hundred homes and twenty-five businesses. Multiple commercial properties were destroyed, and business owners returned to their properties to find collapsed walls and roofs. We declared a local state of emergency in Anne Arundel County the next day, September 2, 2021, to allow us to deploy the resources our communities needed.

The State of Maryland worked with us to help ensure our residents and businesses could recover from this storm, and we worked together to submit a major disaster declaration for the State of Maryland through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). However, on October 8, 2021, over a month after we had declared a local state of emergency, FEMA denied the requested major disaster declaration for the State of Maryland.

With this denial, Anne Arundel County could only look to the State to provide the financial relief our residents and businesses needed to recover from the storm damages. We sent a letter requesting assistance through the VLT Fund's Small, Minority, and Women-Owned Business Account and the Department of Housing and Community Development's disaster relief programs. While the State made \$4 million in funding available through the Department of Housing and Community Development, without a State or Federal declaration the businesses could not benefit from the VLT fund to make repairs and prevent further economic loss.

SB 650 would ensure that there is a clear process for local governments to access grant funding once a local state of emergency is declared, preventing a delay like this from happening again, and ensuring that our residents and businesses have the funding they need to recover from an emergency as soon as possible.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on Senate Bill 650.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Stuart Pittman".

Stuart Pittman  
County Executive