



MARYLAND
Association of
COUNTIES

COUNTY EMERGENCY MANAGERS AFFILIATE

LETTER IN SUPPORT OF SB 650 / HB 789

PUBLIC SAFETY – STATE DISASTER RECOVERY FUND BILL

SENATE BUDGET AND TAXATION COMMITTEE / HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 7, 2023

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) Emergency Managers Affiliate **SUPPORTS** SB 650/HB 789 – Public Safety – State Disaster Recovery Fund Bill. This bill would create a non-lapsing fund (“the Fund”), administered by the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM), that can be accessed to provide financial support if a unit of local government declares an emergency, without a formal federal emergency declaration. SB 650/HB 789 would require the Governor to set aside \$20 million in his FY 2025 budget to establish the Fund.

The Fund would provide disaster recovery assistance to families and individuals as well as provide financial assistance to units of local government for the repair, restoration, or replacement of public property damaged in an emergency in the absence of a federal emergency declaration. Additionally, the Fund would provide low or no-interest loans to businesses and non-profit organizations affected by an emergency if a federal emergency declaration is not received. Following a federal emergency declaration, the Fund would provide for the unmet needs of individuals or families that have been denied federal aid but meet the criteria of receiving funding under this bill and would also match funds provided to individuals, state, and local governmental units.

As emergency management evolves to respond to matters beyond its historical scope of natural disasters, the law must evolve with it to support these developments. Adequate funding of local emergency management departments has never been more important to the goal of keeping Marylanders safe. Over the years, and especially demonstrated in recent events, the emergency management infrastructure has been called upon to respond to an increasingly diverse array of challenges. This bill would be greatly beneficial in ensuring that emergency management services continue to be well-positioned to serve Marylanders. Accordingly, MACo Emergency Managers Affiliate urges the Committee to give SB 650/ HB 789 a report of **FAVORABLE**.

Respectfully,

DocuSigned by:
Mike Hinson
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