



House Bill 1141

Human Services - 2-1-1 and 3-1-1 Systems - Nonemergency Information and Referrals

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Health and Government Operations
Committee

Date: March 1, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1141 **WITH AMENDMENTS**. This bill envisions a statewide 2-1-1 and 3-1-1 system for non-emergency government services, resources, and information to streamline service delivery for Maryland residents, businesses, and visitors.

While counties support a coordinated, stakeholder-driven approach to guide the design and implementation of an integrated system, MACo urges amendments to guard against unintended costs for county governments.

HB 1141 establishes the Maryland 2-1-1 and 3-1-1 Board within the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) to create and operate a statewide integrated system capable of notifying the appropriate state or local agencies, programs, and departments of requests for non-emergency services, information, resources, and referrals. Counties could join a department-funded statewide system, as specified in the bill, or operate a separate, county-funded 3-1-1 system.

2-1-1 and 3-1-1 are fast, simple, and convenient numbers for non-emergency issues and information on government services like refuse collection, snow removal, pothole repair, public transportation schedules, public hearings, resources, and referrals. This service makes customer service more effective and responsive, allowing 9-1-1 specialists to focus on emergency calls.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Carl Henn's Law, landmark legislation to update state laws and the 9-1-1 financing system, to provide the flexibility and resources needed to deploy a statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) system that Maryland residents expect and deserve. As Maryland accelerates its move toward NG911, reducing the number of 9-1-1 calls related to non-emergency issues is critical.

MACo encourages efforts to enhance non-emergency communications in Maryland but urges clarifying amendments to ensure county governments are not responsible for any costs related to the state-mandated integrated system.

HB 1141 urges a statewide effort to deliver essential services equitably and ensure coordination between the State and local governments across Maryland. Accordingly, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** report on HB 1141.