

Department of Legislative Services  
Maryland General Assembly  
2014 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE

Senate Bill 338

(The President)(By Request - Administration)

Finance

Health and Government Operations and  
Appropriations

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**Public Safety - Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board - Established**

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This Administration bill establishes the Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board in the Department of Information Technology (DoIT) to coordinate the operation and maintenance of the Statewide Public Safety Interoperability Radio System (Maryland FiRST).

The bill takes effect June 1, 2014.

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**Fiscal Summary**

**State Effect:** Any expense reimbursements for board members and staffing costs are assumed to be minimal and absorbable within existing budgeted resources as DoIT already has a strong role in implementation of the system. DoIT advises, however, that staff may have to be diverted from other priorities to meet the bill's requirements.

**Local Effect:** None.

**Small Business Effect:** The Administration has determined that this bill has minimal or no impact on small business (attached). The Department of Legislative Services concurs with this assessment.

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**Analysis**

**Bill Summary:** The board consists of several representatives of State agencies and five members appointed by the Governor who represent local government entities that are either users of or contributors to Maryland FiRST. In selecting the local government

representatives, the Governor must appoint members who represent the interoperability regions of the State with expertise in public safety and communications issues relevant to various locations; consult with the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), the Maryland Municipal League, and appropriate local public safety organizations and professionals; and give primary consideration to State agencies and local governments that have adopted the system as a primary platform for public safety communications. The term of each member appointed by the Governor is four years, staggered, and begins on June 1. The Secretary of Information Technology or the Secretary's designee must serve as the chair of the board.

The board may meet as often as necessary but *must* meet at least once each quarter. A member of the board may not receive compensation as a member of the board but is entitled to reimbursement for travel expenses. DoIT must staff the board, providing sufficient staff to handle the increased duties related to completion and maintenance of the system as well as a director who is responsible for daily operations.

The Statewide Interoperability Radio Control Board must:

- establish standard operating procedures, quality of service standards, and maintenance guidelines for the system;
- establish working groups of the system's users;
- approve the addition of new system users and the removal of existing users;
- coordinate participatory, collaborative, or reciprocal relationships with local governments;
- resolve any conflict among system users relating to the operation, maintenance, or improvement of the system that cannot be resolved with the standard operating procedures;
- review the annual cost estimation provided by the director of the board;
- recommend to the Governor and the General Assembly funding and resource levels for system operations and maintenance;
- advise the Governor and the General Assembly on resources needed for appropriate operation and expansion to meet service needs for public safety communications statewide; and
- negotiate agreements with federal agencies, surrounding states, or the District of Columbia for the use of the system.

The board must continue to receive guidance and input from the Maryland Statewide Communications Interoperability Program (MSCIP) and the Statewide Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC).

**Current Law:** For many years, the 700 MHz project was governed by an interagency governance group headed by the Department of Budget and Management Office of Information Technology, now DoIT. The group included membership of federal, State, and local agencies. Leadership was then transferred to the Department of State Police. In a July 2008 executive order, responsibility for public safety communications systems, including the 700 MHz system, was placed under MSCIP complete with a State Interoperability Director appointed by the Governor and a program management office. Advice to this program was to be provided by SIEC, with State and local representation including legislative members.

**Background:** For more than a decade, the State has been supporting construction of an integrated statewide public safety wireless communications system that will be a primary radio communications system for public safety first responders throughout the State. The system uses the Public Safety 700 MHz spectrum licensed to the State by the Federal Communications Commission. Once completed, this radio system will be the primary operating radio system for all State agencies, providing a communications platform for 16 State operating units and allowing for seamless interoperability among State users and first responders at all levels of government. Interoperable communications is the ability of first responders to transmit voice and data communications in real-time, regardless of agency or jurisdictional boundary. When communications systems are interoperable, police and firefighters responding to a routine incident or a catastrophic emergency can talk to and share information with each other to coordinate efforts and work effectively together.

MACo advises that several county governments were interested in joining the system in order to enhance their communications capabilities, but they were hesitant to do so because the governance structure of the system was not finalized.

In the past, local jurisdictions and State agencies have built stand-alone systems that met individual agency needs. However, the deployment of independent nonintegrated systems throughout the State, owned and operated by the State, county, and local agencies, has created situations that hamper cross-jurisdictional and cross-discipline communications. Radio communication interoperability among State agencies and localities is hampered by the use of different operating frequency bands, technologies, and system platforms. Additionally, older systems generally allow only voice communications and do not support more modern mobile data applications.

According to a July 2008 Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan, the 700 MHz is conceived as the ultimate level of interoperability. That plan identifies six levels of interoperability which are shown in **Exhibit 1**. The long-term goal of the 700 MHz system is to attain interoperability at the highest level, level six.



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## Exhibit 1 Levels of Interoperability

<u>Interoperability Levels</u>	<u>Interoperability Initiatives</u>	<u>Description</u>
Level 1	Radio caches	Physical exchange of radios with other agencies at the scene of an event. Obvious limitation is having sufficient radios on hand for large-scale events.
Level 2	Interoperability-talkaround	Intended to provide local area communications in situations where network coverage is not available.
Level 3	Mutual aid	Established radio frequency coverage areas to be used exclusively by first responders for communication during special events. Limitation is that radios have to be tuned to the same frequency.
Level 4	Operability across frequency bands	Interoperability achieved by linking all first responder radio systems in a variety of ways. For example, this may be done through portable network-to-network gateways that are deployed to the scene of an incident.
Level 5	System specific roaming	Sharing existing systems. Full interoperability possible when jurisdictions use common equipment. However, when equipment is from different manufacturers, there is often limited functionality. At that point, level four gateways may supplement interoperability.
Level 6	Statewide 700 MHz system	Interoperability that relies on open standard functionality both for air and wireless communication. National standards have been adopted, and these standards are referenced in Maryland's planned 700 MHz system.

Source: Maryland Statewide Communications Interoperability Plan

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### Additional Information

**Prior Introductions:** None.

**Cross File:** HB 308 (The Speaker)(By Request - Administration) - Health and Government Operations and Appropriations.

**Information Source(s):** Department of Budget and Management, Department of Information Technology, Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems, Military Department, Department of State Police, Maryland Department of

Transportation, Maryland Municipal League, Maryland Association of Counties, Baltimore City, Kent and Montgomery counties, Town of Berlin, City of Rockville, Department of Legislative Services

**Fiscal Note History:** First Reader - January 29, 2014  
ncs/mcr

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## ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC IMPACT ON SMALL BUSINESSES

TITLE OF BILL: Public Safety – Maryland Statewide Interoperability Board –  
Established

BILL NUMBER: Senate Bill 338/House Bill 308

PREPARED BY: Ray Lehr, Director, Statewide Interoperability Director

### PART A. ECONOMIC IMPACT RATING

This agency estimates that the proposed bill:

WILL HAVE MINIMAL OR NO ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL  
BUSINESS

OR

WILL HAVE MEANINGFUL ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MARYLAND SMALL  
BUSINESSES

### PART B. ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

The proposed legislation will have no impact on small business in Maryland.