

Department of Legislative Services
Maryland General Assembly
2025 Session

FISCAL AND POLICY NOTE
Third Reader

Senate Bill 138

(Senator Kagan)

Education, Energy, and the Environment

Health and Government Operations

Public Safety - Maryland 9-1-1 Board and Maryland Department of Emergency Management - Regulatory Authority

This bill authorizes the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and the Maryland 9-1-1 Board (which is housed within MDEM) to adopt regulations to implement and enforce the requirements of State law. **The bill takes effect July 1, 2025.**

Fiscal Summary

State Effect: None. The bill's requirements can be handled using existing budgeted resources.

Local Effect: The bill does not directly affect local government operations or finances.

Small Business Effect: None.

Analysis

Current Law:

Maryland Department of Emergency Management

Chapters 287 and 288 of 2021 established MDEM as a principal department of the Executive Branch of State government and as the successor to the Maryland Emergency Management Agency, which had been housed within the Military Department. MDEM is responsible for developing emergency management policies and coordinating the State's risk reduction strategies and disaster response during any major emergency or disaster. This includes supporting local governments as needed or requested and coordinating

assistance with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and other federal partners. MDEM manages many of the federal grants that fund a broad range of initiatives leading to enhanced protection from and responses to the full range of natural and man-made disasters that could threaten the State's citizens.

Maryland's 9-1-1 System and the Maryland 9-1-1 Board

The State's 9-1-1 system operates primarily through public safety answering points (PSAPs), which are generally owned and operated by local governments. 9-1-1 specialists working within PSAPs answer, redirect, and take action on 9-1-1 calls received based on the location of the originating 9-1-1 call. State and local governments are preparing for "next generation" 9-1-1 technology that will allow PSAPs to access not only more accurate information about caller location but also other information that will assist emergency personnel in communicating with callers and responding more efficiently. Legislation has been enacted in recent years to, among other things:

- transfer the Maryland 9-1-1 Board, which is responsible for administering the 9-1-1 Trust Fund and overseeing the State's 9-1-1 system, from the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services to MDEM;
- expand the uses of the 9-1-1 Trust Fund to include providing funding for 9-1-1 specialist training activities; and
- increase funding for the State's 9-1-1 system.

Additional Comments: MDEM advises that the Maryland 9-1-1 Board's regulatory authority was inadvertently repealed between 2016 and 2020 as the board was transferred to MDEM and numerous bills were enacted to modify the board's responsibilities and authority. Also, regulatory authority was omitted from MDEM's authorizing legislation in 2021.

Additional Information

Recent Prior Introductions: Similar legislation has not been introduced within the last three years.

Designated Cross File: HB 423 (Delegate Lopez) - Health and Government Operations.

Information Source(s): Maryland Department of Emergency Management; Kent, Montgomery, Washington, and Worcester counties; Maryland Association of Counties; Department of Legislative Services

Fiscal Note History: First Reader - January 15, 2025
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