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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL STRICKLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
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**SENATE BILL 80 - MARYLAND INTRASTATE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
ASSISTANCE COMPACT**

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

15 January 2020

Senate Bill 80 - Maryland Intrastate Emergency Management Assistance Compact, will enhance the ability of local jurisdictions to prepare for, respond to, and recover from incidents that require the use of resources. The bill will eliminate a burden for local jurisdictions to participate in the Maryland Emergency Management Assistance Compact by eliminating the need for a jurisdiction to declare a state of emergency in order to request resources necessary during an incident. MEMA strongly supports this change as it will lead to easier sharing of resources across the State of Maryland.

BACKGROUND: MEMA serves state agencies, local jurisdictions, and the general public by coordinating efforts and resources before, during, and after emergencies to protect the life and property of Maryland and her citizens. Our mission is to proactively reduce disaster risks and reliably manage consequences through collaborative work with Maryland's communities and partners. MEMA coordinates state efforts during incidents, to ensure an efficient state response and conducts resource management operations to support responders and governments. This includes supporting local governments as requested, and coordinating assistance with other state entities, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other Federal partners.

The Agency is authorized, through the responsibilities granted to the Director of MEMA, in the Annotated Code of Maryland Public Safety Article-Title 14 to carry out the State emergency management program.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT DURING INCIDENTS AND DISASTERS: Disasters range in size and impact and are primarily managed at the local level. When the impacts of a disaster exceed the capabilities of a local jurisdiction, these communities seek the assistance from other local jurisdictions before requesting support from MEMA. In addition to responding to the demands of developing incidents, communities often host special events which tax their local public safety resource capability. Special events also may require assistance from other local jurisdictions through mechanisms other than routine mutual aid processes.

Time is a critical element during a disaster. Disaster survivors need assistance from local jurisdictions as quickly as possible. In addition, specialized resources sometimes must travel long distances to reach the area of the incident. Modernizing the current Maryland Emergency Management Assistance Compact (MEMAC) and removing administrative burdens will help emergency management and public safety resources reach the requesting jurisdiction as efficiently as possible.

MEMAC currently requires local jurisdictions to declare a local state of emergency in order to participate in the Compact. This requirement has not proven necessary nor ideal in practice.

First, not all emergencies that require additional support rise to the level of requiring a local state of emergency. Whether they are geographically constrained, political will does not exist to declare a state of emergency, or the incident requires a specialized piece of equipment not available internally, local jurisdictions often have resource needs that do not rise to severity requiring a state of emergency. Also, Maryland is home to a number of large special events which require extensive public safety resources. These events require dedicated resources and cannot detract from the operational capacity of local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions need to be able to utilize out of jurisdiction resources from localities throughout Maryland for these events without a state of emergency being in place. Declaring a local state of emergency for a special event has negative impacts, discouraging the community from attending that event.

PROPOSED REVISIONS: This bill amends the current MEMAC language to allow for inter-jurisdictional mutual aid in response to emergency events. Jurisdictions would no longer be required to declare a local state of emergency as a provision to request resources through MEMAC. The governing body of a jurisdiction must still opt-in to participate in MEMAC. The proposal changes paperwork requirements of MEMAC to better meet the capabilities and implementation of MEMAC by jurisdictions and MEMA. Rather than require a jurisdiction to specify resource types, it is proposed for requesting jurisdictions to identify the functional area for which assistance is needed, the mission and the amount of aid requested, and logistics for aid staging. Finally the bill corrects inconsistent terminology usage and clarifies jurisdictional implementation requirements for MEMAC.

Resource management and coordination are ongoing programmatic efforts at MEMA. The proposed changes to MEMAC in this bill should not necessitate additional personnel to be hired by local jurisdictions. If this bill were to become law, the governing bodies of jurisdictions must adopt the new MEMAC language into local codes or charters.

SB 80 is an important step in modernizing resource management processes in Maryland and we respectfully request a **favorable report**.

For additional information please feel free to contact Catherine A. Kelly, Director, Legislative and Government Affairs, Maryland Military Department. By email: catherine.a.kelly26.nfg@mail.mil or by phone: 410-446-5390.