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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL STRICKLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
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**SENATE BILL 81 - STATE GOVERNMENT - EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT -
CONTINUITY PLANNING**

Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee 15 January 2020

Senate Bill 81 ensures certain continuity planning is conducted by State agencies in the executive branch. This requirement is met through the development of continuity of operations (COOP) plans for State departments and a continuity of government (COG) plan which synthesizes individual department plans and also outlines the strategy to maintain government services.

BACKGROUND: Continuity is the ability to provide uninterrupted services and support before, during, and after an incident that disrupts normal operations. Agencies activate COOP plans when an incident occurs which disrupts daily activities. An agency might activate a COOP plan for a natural disaster which prohibits employees from getting to work, an impact to the department's building such as a fire or water leak, or a cyber attack which renders an agency's systems inoperable.

Regardless of the reason for activation a continuity plan ensures that critical functions of a department, and more broadly, the government can continue. Agencies have developed and updated continuity plans as required by Executive Order 01.01.2013.06 (Maryland Emergency Preparedness Program).

PROPOSED REVISIONS: Senate Bill 81 formalizes COOP planning in code and provides requirements of state agencies and MEMA to ensure comprehensive continuity planning occurs. SB81 will codify the importance of COOP and Continuity of Government planning in Maryland and provide resources to support State Departments in developing their plans.

This proposal includes a new provision, requiring MEMA to develop a Continuity of Government (COG) plan. The COG plan synthesizes information contained in individual COOP plans into a broad strategy outlining strategies to ensure Maryland State Government continues to operate without interruption. This bill introduces COG planning as a programmatic effort to ensure the State can provide essential government functions during and after emergencies. COG planning is a component not previously included in Executive Order 01.01.2013.06. COG planning is a best-practice which government entities throughout the nation undertake.

Senate Bill 81 demonstrates the State's commitment to Marylanders by ensuring critical services are available 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.
