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TIMOTHY E. GOWEN
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

February 19, 2020

Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 721 – Emergency Management – Chief Resilience Officer – Appointment and Duties
Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

I am writing to share information regarding the above referenced Senate Bill.

Senate Bill 721 establishes a Chief Resilience Officer within MEMA to enhance local resilience efforts. If this bill passes Maryland will join the list of states who have appointed a Chief Resilience Officer. Recently Florida, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Rhode Island, Colorado, and the District of Columbia have all appointed Chief Resilience Officers. In addition countless cities are taking action on resilience activities by appointing city or town resilience officers.

Senate Bill 721 does compliment the ongoing resilience work across our state government. Developing a resilient future requires a systematic process involving all partners. Senate Bill 721 outlines initiatives including developing a strategy for increasing resilience, engaging governmental and non-governmental partners, aligning existing initiatives, and ensuring Maryland complies with federal codes and regulations. The bill also ties together the components of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan with Maryland's resilience strategy. By linking the State Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment with resilience efforts, Maryland's overall strategy will prioritize actions based upon greatest risk.

In 2018, MEMA and the National Governors Association hosted a resilience retreat which identified numerous outcomes and next steps. One such finding was the need to establish a comprehensive workgroup to align statewide resilience efforts. In 2019, MEMA implemented this finding, establishing the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG). The DRRWG is comprised of voluntary participation from over 22 state agencies and is results focused. The goal of the group is to break down barriers, open communications, and take actionable steps to reduce disaster risk. Already in 2020 the group is making good progress.

As the fiscal note for SB721 indicates there are staffing costs to the approach required by the bill. We cannot fulfill the requirements of the bill with existing resources.

Thank you for your support of the Maryland Military Department. We would be happy to provide any additional information if required. Please feel free to reach out to our Director of Legislative and Government Affairs by e-mail catherine.a.kelly26.nfg@mail.mil or by phone 410-446-5390.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Timothy Gowen', with a large, sweeping flourish extending from the top left of the signature.

TIMOTHY GOWEN
Major General, MDARNG
The Adjutant General