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March 12, 2020

To: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Chair, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

From: The Office of the Attorney General

Re: Senate Bill 1036 – Maryland Emergency Management Agency – Cybersecurity  
Coordination and Operations Office – Establishment – **Letter of Information**

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The Maryland Cybersecurity Council was established July 1, 2015, through Senate Bill 542.<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill 542 set forth the membership of the Council, including that the Council be chaired by the Attorney General. The membership was revised by Senate Bill 281, effective October 1, 2018. Pursuant to SB 542, the council must work with the National Institute of Standards and Technology, and other federal agencies, private sector businesses, and private cybersecurity experts to improve cybersecurity in Maryland. Beginning July 1, 2017, the council must submit a report of its activities every two years thereafter.

In their Initial Activities Report, published July 1, 2016, the Council recommended that Maryland establish a cybersecurity first responder reserve.<sup>2</sup> The reserve would coordinate with top cyber expert reservists in the event of a cyber security emergency, and suggested the Maryland Emergency Management Agency as the Agency to lead and coordinate the proposed cyber first responder reserve.<sup>3</sup>

The following year, the Council published the Maryland Cybersecurity Council Activities Report (2015-2017) on July 1, 2017.<sup>4</sup> Again, the Council recommended the first responder reserve, but specified no details and confined itself to simply stating an objective. The Council's

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<sup>1</sup> Md. Ann. Code, St. Gov't Art. §9-2901

<sup>2</sup> Maryland Cybersecurity Council, *Initial Activities Report*, pg. 11 (July 1, 2016), <https://www.umgc.edu/documents/upload/maryland-cybersecurity-council-initial-activities-report.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> *Id.*

<sup>4</sup> Maryland Cybersecurity Council, *Maryland Cybersecurity Council Activities Report (2015-2017)*, pgs. 8, 10 (July 1, 2017), <https://www.umgc.edu/documents/upload/maryland-cybersecurity-council-biennial-report-2015-2017.pdf>.

recommendation for a first responder reserve was again carried forward in the Council's July 1, 2019 Activities Report.<sup>5</sup>

Senate Bill 1036 establishes the Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office (hereinafter, Office) within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The Office will be responsible for improving local, regional and Statewide cybersecurity readiness and response; assist political subdivisions, school boards, and agencies in the development of cybersecurity disruption plans; implement cybersecurity best practices and connect all political subdivisions and agencies to the appropriate resources for any purpose related to cybersecurity readiness and response.

cc: Members of the Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee

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<sup>5</sup> Maryland Cybersecurity Council, *Maryland Cybersecurity Council Activities Report (2017-2019)*, pg. 30 (July 1, 2019), <https://www.umgc.edu/documents/upload/maryland-cybersecurity-council-activities-report-2017-2019.pdf>.