



LARRY HOGAN
GOVERNOR
COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF

STATE OF MARYLAND
MILITARY DEPARTMENT
FIFTH REGIMENT ARMORY
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

TIMOTHY E. GOWEN
MAJOR GENERAL
THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF RUSSELL STRICKLAND, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY**

**HOUSE BILL 648 - MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY –
DEFINITIONS AND AUTHORITY**

House Health and Government Operations Committee

25 February 2020

House Bill 648 codifies the Maryland Emergency Management Agency's role in coordinating state emergency management activities in an effort to reduce risk and limit suffering during disasters. The proposal updates a number of key provisions pertaining to definitions and authorities. Most notably the bill solidifies the Maryland Emergency Management Agency as the coordinating entity for not only consequence management actions but also disaster risk reduction activities which are critical in breaking the cycle of disaster. The bill designates MEMA as the agency that coordinates activities involving more than two agencies and disasters that exceed the capability of local communities--incidents during which we must support local emergency managers' efforts. The bill also clarifies and defines other critical emergency management terms such as outlining the importance of prevention, response, recovery, mitigation, and protection mission areas rather than outdated terminology.

Maryland's current emergency management policy dates back to the 1990s. This policy, developed when MEMA was viewed mainly as the "hurricane people," the specialization and activities of MEMA has evolved dramatically in the last 30 years. Today MEMA coordinates activities before, during, and after disasters for a variety of hazards such as severe weather, civil unrest, and incidents that require multiagency coordination. In addition to traditional response and recovery activities, MEMA is now leading a push to stop disasters from happening through disaster risk reduction projects.

House Bill 648 is an important step in modernizing emergency management policy 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.