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Health and Government
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Government Operations and Estates
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Health Facilities and
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ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Health and Government Operations Committee

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HB 6 Public Safety- 9-1-1 Fees- Audits

Why Do We Need this Bill?

Currently, the ENSB – *Emergency Numbers Services Board*- is responsible for communicating with carriers regarding Maryland’s 9-1-1 fee structure and any changes that are approved in addition to auditing the carriers for compliance. These responsibilities are not something that the ENSB is staffed appropriately to do, nor do they have adequate tools to audit and collect.

Carl Henn’s Law,” (HB 397) enacted in 2019, adjusted the 9-1-1 fee structure. As Maryland moves forward with improvements to the 9-1-1 system, it is imperative to verify that all 202 telephone companies and other 9-1-1 service providers are complying with the funding portions of the new law. There have been problems with the accuracy in collection of the 9-1-1 fees which this bill addresses. T-Mobile had been overcharging its customers for up to 14.5 years as reported in [Baltimore Sun](#). In one [Michigan](#) county, it was discovered that Sprint had inadvertently not been remitting the increased 9-1-1 fee, resulting in the company making a \$1.45 million late payment.

What Does This Bill Do?

In order to ensure that the 9-1-1 fees are collected and remitted accurately this legislation will authorize the Comptroller to be responsible for collections and to perform audits.

HB 6 would:

- Authorize the Comptroller’s Office to conduct audits of 9-1-1 fee collection and remittance of the ~202 telephone service providers;
- Require the Comptroller to submit an annual report to the ENSB; and,
- Allow for a fee not more than .5% to be charged for this service (less than the ENSB is currently paying).

The Comptroller already does the compliance tax audits on carriers for sales tax and is best equipped to handle the 9-1-1 fee as well. This legislation will make it more efficient and effective to collect 9-1-1 fees from carriers.

The Comptroller’s office worked with the NG 9-1-1 Commission and supports this legislation.

HB6 has been introduced as **emergency legislation**, to allow the Comptroller's Office to begin immediately. Each month that goes by without proper oversight is a missed opportunity to ensure that the much-needed fees are being collected accurately for our 9-1-1 Centers.

I urge the Committee to favorably report HB6.