

MARYLAND STATE FIREMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
www.msfa.org



Johnie F. Roth, Jr.

Legislative Chairman

17 State Circle

Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Office 410-974-2222

Cell 202-215-2954

Johnie.roth@bccrs.org

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Madam Chair Pendergrass

Madam Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk

SUPPORT OF HB 648 – MARYLAND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY –DEFINITIONS AND AUTHORITY

Good afternoon Madam Chair Pendergrass, Madam Vice Chair Pena-Melnyk and members of the Health and Government Operations Committee.

My name is Johnie Roth, Jr. and I chair the Legislative Committee of the Maryland State Firemen's Association (MSFA), and I am writing in SUPPORT of HB 648.

The MSFA is a statewide organization representing over 25,000 volunteer fire, rescue, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics and 363 member companies.

The Maryland State Firemen's Association is glad to support the bill before you today as it clarifies, in simple language, that an "Emergency" is an imminent threat or occurrence. We all know that emergencies come in many forms, from a Winter Weather Emergency to a Railroad Incident Emergency where a derailment has occurred and rail cars were carrying toxic chemicals that could affect the mass evacuations of residents. Either way we must be

prepared or everyone must operate as a team to mitigate any situation or incident in the Great State of Maryland.

The fire and rescue services of Maryland have always worked well together with our partner agencies through communication and dialog to changing needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors. We further feel that this bill will alleviate any question as to MEMA's primary responsibility and gives them the authority to develop policies on the coordination of disaster risk reduction.

Thank you Madam Chair for your consideration and we respectfully request a FAVORABLE REPORT on HB 648.

**Johnie F. Roth, Jr.
MSFA Chairman
Legislative Committee**