



## **Senate Bill 837**

*Criminal Law - Public Safety - Interference With Agencies and Services - Prohibitions*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judicial Proceedings Committee

Date: March 3, 2020

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 837. This bill will update state laws to protect against telephone misuse and sophisticated cyber-attacks that pose a significant threat to the security and stability of Maryland's 9-1-1 system.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Carl Henn's Law, landmark legislation to update state laws and the 9-1-1 financing system to provide the flexibility and resources needed for the deployment of a statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) system that our residents expect and deserve. As Maryland accelerates its move toward NG911, proper safeguards are necessary to protect against new and evolving cyber threats, including denial-of-service attacks and intrusions by malicious hackers.

SB 837 generally prohibits any actions that intend to interrupt or impair the functioning of a 9-1-1 center. Specifically, the bill prohibits the use of telephone facilities or equipment to make calls or send data to a 9-1-1 center or public safety agency with the intent to (1) trigger, affect, or disrupt an emergency response or (2) impair the functioning of the 9-1-1 center or public safety agency. If an individual commits a prohibited act that interrupts the operations of a 9-1-1 center, the person is guilty of a felony and subject to imprisonment for up to 10 years and/or a fine up to \$50,000.

The bill also expands the scope of acts currently prohibited during the use of a telephone or equipment to include sending data that is reasonably expected or intends to annoy, abuse, torment, harass, or embarrass another. Additionally, the bill prohibits a person from violating the prohibition on misuse of telephone facilities and equipment by targeting a 9-1-1 center or public safety agency. A violator is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to five years, and/or a \$25,000 maximum fine

By strengthening state laws to protect against growing and evolving cyber threats, SB 837 will enhance public safety communications in Maryland and in our local communities.

Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 837.