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January 28, 2021

Senator Paul Pinsky, Chair
Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 East, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: SB 62 – Emergency Management – Chief Resilience Officer – Appointment and Duties
Letter of Information

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

I am writing to share information regarding the above referenced Senate Bill.

Senate Bill 62 establishes a Chief Resilience Officer within MEMA to enhance local resilience efforts. If this bill passes Maryland will join the list of states who have appointed a Chief Resilience Officer including Florida, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Virginia, Rhode Island, Colorado, and the District of Columbia. Countless cities are taking action on resilience activities by appointing city or town resilience officers as well.

Senate Bill 62 does compliment the ongoing resilience work across our state government. Developing a resilient future requires a systematic process involving all partners. Senate Bill 62 outlines initiatives including developing a strategy for increasing resilience, engaging governmental and non-governmental partners, aligning existing initiatives, and ensuring Maryland complies with federal codes and regulations. The bill also ties together the components of the State Hazard Mitigation Plan with Maryland's resilience strategy. By linking the State Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment with resilience efforts, Maryland's overall strategy will prioritize actions based upon greatest risk.

In 2018, MEMA and the National Governors Association hosted a resilience retreat which identified numerous outcomes and next steps. One such finding was the need to establish a comprehensive workgroup to align statewide resilience efforts. In 2019, MEMA implemented this finding, establishing the Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group (DRRWG). The DRRWG is comprised of voluntary participation from over 22 state agencies and is results focused. The goal of the group is to break down barriers, open communications, and take actionable steps to reduce disaster risk. The group continues to make good progress.

As the fiscal note for SB62 indicates there are staffing costs to the approach required by the bill. We cannot fulfill the requirements of the bill with existing resources.

Thank you for your support of the Maryland Military Department. We would be happy to provide additional information if required. Please feel free to reach out by e-mail catherine.a.kelly26.nfg@mail.mil or by phone 410-446-5390.

Sincerely,

Catherine A. Kelly

Catherine Kelly
Director, Legislative and Government Affairs