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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 68 — Maryland Department of Emergency Management – Establishment

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

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

Senate Bill 68 would create the Maryland Department of Emergency Management as the successor agency to Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA). The new Department would be a principal Department in the Executive Branch, and the Secretary would be appointed by the Governor, and subject to Senate confirmation. Currently the Maryland Emergency Management agency is housed under the Military Department. The Executive Director of the agency is appointed by the Governor, is not subject to Senate confirmation, and the agency is not a principal department of the Executive Branch.

The bill would provide for a streamlined transition to the new Department of Emergency Management to ensure continuity of operations. All budgeted staff at MEMA would be transferred to the new department, and they would retain the same status and responsibilities.

16 of the 50 States across the country have emergency management departments that are either codified as members of the Governor's cabinet or directly report to the Governor: Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Louisiana, Mississippi, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Wyoming.

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