



Government Affairs Office  
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**BILL NO. :** **Senate Bill 714**

**TITLE:** Public Safety- 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System- Alterations

**COMMITTEE:** Finance

**HEARING DATE:** March 9, 2021

**VERIZON POSITION:** **Favorable with Amendment (CHANGED from Opposition)**

**PURPOSE OF BILL:**

This bill requires commercial mobile radio service (CMRS) providers and 9-1-1 service carriers to provide PSAPs, the Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) and the Board notice of service outages lasting more than 30 minutes. The bill also alters the composition of the Maryland 9-1-1 Board, its responsibilities and alters the permissive uses of the 9-1-1 Trust Fund.

**COMMENTS:**

This bill imposes outage notification requirements for wireless and VoIP originating access services (e.g. cell site, MSC and VoIP server outages) that are similar to the type of notifications Verizon voluntarily provides for jurisdictions in the Washington, DC metropolitan area, including Prince George's and Montgomery Counties, for its wireline and wireless outages. As amended, the bill applies reporting thresholds based on existing federal regulatory requirements in a reasonable manner for wireline VoIP and wireless services, which help ensure that PSAPs are notified of significant outages most likely to meaningfully affect consumers' ability to reach 911, and that service providers are able to leverage their existing systems to implement the new law in a timely manner. This approach will help ensure that public safety agencies are both (1) aware of significant network events, while (2) not overwhelmed with information about minor incidents.

The legislation also ensures that information submitted to the PSAPs and MJOC is given appropriate confidentiality protections, insofar as these reports include information that is sensitive for security and competitive reasons. State governments, the FCC and other Federal agencies have uniformly recognized that this information can raise both security concerns for the public and competitive-related issues for service providers.

Finally, the bill would prohibit the use of 911 Trust Fund monies for the state's 988 suicide prevention hotline resources. Verizon supports this provision in itself, which is a straightforward prohibition on unlawful 911 fee diversion. But Verizon also strongly supports nationwide implementation of the 988 dialing code, and recognizes that state governments might consider additional fees to support those programs. Verizon would encourage Maryland to consider how the Commonwealth of Virginia is approaching the issue of 988 and 911 fee implementation in its current session.

Verizon appreciates having been able to work with the sponsors; to address our concerns related to the definition of "outage" for wireline and wireless services and to ensure confidentiality of the sensitive information to be provided in the report. With the amendments the bill will be stronger and will support our longstanding commitment to working and partnering with the public safety community to make Maryland an even safer place in which to live, work, and visit.

**FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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