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BILL NO.: HB 879

TITLE: Maryland Emergency Management Agency - Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office – Establishment

SPONSOR: Delegate R. Watson

COMMITTEE: Health and Government Operations

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 10, 2021

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 879 – Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) - Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office – Establishment. The legislation would establish a Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA).

When the Baltimore County Public School system suffered a ransomware attack, all of Baltimore County saw firsthand the devastation that can occur from vulnerabilities in cybersecurity. Swift action was required to get our students back in school, and it will take months of effort to fully recover our systems. Moving forward, it is essential that State and Local agencies undertake a coordinated effort to prevent and stem the effects of cybersecurity attacks in the future.

House Bill 879 would create a Cybersecurity Coordination and Operation Office within MEMA. This office would increase digital safety efforts by improving local, regional, and statewide cybersecurity readiness and response. They would also provide services to political subdivisions and school boards. This would help achieve cybersecurity best practices statewide. The office also would coordinate cybersecurity services throughout state agencies. This will keep the State's digital information and technological services safe and secure from threat.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 879. For more information, please contact Chuck Conner, Director of Government Affairs, at cconner@baltimorecountymd.gov.