



Government Affairs Office
12 West Street
Annapolis, MD 21401
(410) 269-6653

BILL NO. : **House Bill 989**

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

COMMITTEE: Finance

HEARING DATE: March 10, 2021

VERIZON POSITION: **Opposed**

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 drafted, however, the term “outage” is not defined. Verizon recommends that the bill be amended to apply the same reporting thresholds already used for the metropolitan Washington jurisdictions, which help ensure that PSAPs are notified of significant outages most likely to meaningfully affect consumers’ ability to reach 911. 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. And it ensures that service providers can implement the new law expeditiously. Finally, Verizon submits that this approach can more effectively address public safety’s near-term situational awareness needs than a reporting threshold based on the Federal Communications Commission’s regulations.

The legislature should also ensure 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.

With these issues in mind, Verizon recommends the following amendment, which incorporates the standard currently used for the metropolitan Washington jurisdictions.

1-304.3.

IN THE EVENT OF A PARTIAL OR TOTAL SINGLE COUNTY OR MULTICOUNTY 9-1-1-ACCESSIBLE SERVICE OUTAGE LASTING MORE THAN 30 MINUTES, A CMRS PROVIDER OR 9-1-1 SERVICE CARRIER SHALL:

(1) AS SOON AS PRACTICABLE, NOTIFY ANY AFFECTED PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINT AND THE MARYLAND JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER OF THE 9-1-1-ACCESSIBLE SERVICE OUTAGE OCCURRING ON THE PROVIDER'S OR CARRIER'S NETWORK; AND

(2) IN ADVANCE OF THE NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD, NOTIFY THE BOARD OF ANY 9-1-1-ACCESSIBLE SERVICE OUTAGE OCCURRING ON THE PROVIDER'S OR CARRIER'S NETWORK.

(3) AFFECTED PUBLIC SAFETY ANSWERING POINTS, THE MARYLAND JOINT OPERATIONS CENTER, AND THE BOARD SHALL USE THE INFORMATION IN THE REPORTS SOLELY FOR PUBLIC SAFETY-RELATED PURPOSES AND OTHERWISE MAINTAIN THE CONFIDENTIALITY OF SUCH NOTIFICATIONS.

(4) AN "OUTAGE" FOR THIS PURPOSE IS A SERVICE-IMPACTING EVENT AFFECTING: (A) FOR A CMRS PROVIDER, MORE THAN 25 CELL SITES; OR (B) FOR A 9-1-1 SERVICE CARRIER, A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF END USERS OR EQUIVALENT OF A COMPLETE WIRE CENTER OUTAGE.

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.

As always, we look forward to conversation with the sponsors of the bill regarding the concerns raised.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Tiffany Harvey
Director, State Government & Community Affairs
443-223-2814