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BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21201-2288

March 10, 2021

Delegate Shane E. Pendergrass, Chair
House Health and government Operations Committee
Room 241, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

RE: HB 879 – Maryland Emergency Management – Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office Establishment

Dear Chair Pendergrass:

I am writing to share information regarding the above referenced House Bill. House Bill 879 establishes the Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office within the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) and requires the Director of MEMA to appoint an Executive Director as head of the Office. The proposal requires the Office to be provided with sufficient staff to perform the Office's functions and defines those functions. It also requires the Office to establish regional assistance groups to deliver or coordinate support services to political subdivisions, agencies, or regions.

The Maryland Department of the Military has many cybersecurity mission based units. Within the Air Guard, there are almost 300 Airmen within the 175th Cyber Operations Group located at both Warfield Air Base and soon at Ft. Meade, with a mix of full and part time individuals. Within this unit, they have an Active Duty mission of both cyber offense and defense supporting the United States Cyber Command. They have both an offensive and defensive unit mobilized with over 50 individuals supporting.

Within the Army Guard, their major cybersecurity unit is the 169th Cyber Protection Team with 39 full time Soldiers currently stationed at Laurel Armory and moving to the Army Research Lab in Adelphi. Finally, within the Maryland Defense Force, there is a 12 member cyber unit located at Camp Fretterd. Their mission is to support the Military Department along with the Army and Air Guard units with specific cybersecurity skill sets.

All of these units can be utilized within State Active Duty to support organizations like local governments and/or law enforcement agencies. This request for support is driven through the Governor's office through the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Maryland Joint Operations Center. In general, these requests would come at a time of cyber emergency (like a weather emergency when local capabilities are overwhelmed) and would be supported to defend these agencies. During non-emergency times, our members have partnered with the State Police and State Board of Elections as examples of our

integration within the state. Also note, offensive capability is not legal unless operating in an Active Duty status and are therefore not able to be used within the state. The provisions of HB 879 reach far beyond current operations.

The Maryland Military Department is not able to perform the functions required in the HB 879 with existing resources. In order to create this office, the department would need to hire PIN positions to conduct the duties outlined in the Bill. The Department would need to hire 4 new staff members. The fiscal note reflects the first fiscal cycle would require over \$330,000 in FY22 to fund the resources needed to establish and operate the proposed Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office. The costs for the subsequent fiscal cycles grow exponentially.

Maryland has had numerous cyber-attacks in recent years. Baltimore County, Baltimore City and Dorchester County have recently suffered the consequences of cyber-attacks. These incidents impacted the ability of local communities to carry out normal government functions. In each of these cases, state resources augmented local response activities. In addition, the Federal government recently suffered significant disruption because of the SolarWinds attack that was conducted by a foreign actor.

MEMA is an expert in conducting planning, training, and exercise preparedness activities, having successfully led countless coordination efforts to prepare agencies for a myriad of threats and hazards. In addition, MEMA coordinates the statewide response to consequence management incidents, regardless of origin of the threat. MEMA is able to succeed in both of these activities because of their relationships and close coordination with local emergency managers throughout the state.

It is our hope that this information will be heavily weighted as the Committee considers HB 879.

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 Kelly
Director, Legislative and Government Affairs

