



## Senate Bill 751

### *First Responders and Emergency Responders - Definition - 9-1-1 Dispatchers Included*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: March 8, 2022

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 751. This bill would properly classify 9-1-1 specialists as “first responders” and “emergency responders” in specified provisions of state law.

9-1-1 specialists are the first link in the chain of safety and survival – answering, triaging, and dispatching emergency requests for assistance and providing vital life-safety and life-saving instructions to those who live, work, and travel in Maryland.

9-1-1 specialists are the first, first responders and undergo comprehensive training and certification requirements. These essential employees remain in contact with emergency scene incident commanders and other personnel on the scene of an emergency to ensure effective on-scene response, coordination, and timely resolution.

Recognizing the vital importance of their role in emergency services, SB 751 would classify 9-1-1 specialists as “first responders” and “emergency responders” in several provisions of state law. Most importantly, under current law, specified first responders are entitled to special protections from individuals that inflict physical injury during the course of the first responder’s official duties. This bill would grant those same protections to 9-1-1 specialists.

In addition, the bill would alter the provision of the Maryland Assistance Compact to include 9-1-1 specialists and ensure for necessary collaboration with the Maryland Center for School Safety.

SB 751 would properly recognize Maryland’s 9-1-1 specialists for their role in protecting the public health and well-being of shared constituents. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 751.