



Larry Hogan | Governor

Boyd K. Rutherford | Lt. Governor

Russell J. Strickland | Secretary

Written Testimony - SUPPORT - HB 1003
Public Safety - 3-1-1 Systems - Nonemergency Information

Secretary Russell J. Strickland
Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Health and Government Operations Committee
Hearing Date: 4 MAR 2022

Chairman Shane Pendergrass
Health and Government Operations Committee
Room 241
House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 20401

Chairman Pendergrass,

I write today in **SUPPORT of House Bill 1003**. This bill will establish a statewide 3-1-1 system, which I believe to be a major step forward in building a culture of preparedness and resilience in Maryland.

The truest foundation of preparedness and resilience, at its most basic level, is access to knowledge and information. From individual residents and visitors to businesses and organizations in the State, it is critical that information about government services be available in a way that is free and accessible to all. A statewide 3-1-1 system will ensure that no matter what the question is - from reporting a pothole on a local street to inquiring about social services availability - Marylanders will know 3-1-1 as a baseline first step when disaster strikes.

COVID-19 demonstrated the critical need to establish a source of trustworthy, accessible, and updated information to the general public. Other crises and disasters have reinforced the need for Marylanders and visitors to have one non-emergency number to call when they need help, but not necessarily the type of help that 9-1-1 would provide. A statewide 3-1-1 system will establish a "no wrong door" approach, partnering with Public Safety Answering Points (county 9-1-1 Centers), Maryland 2-1-1, 9-8-8, and the litany of other access points for various services and support for our residents.



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I want to stress that while this effort will require investment, the increase in preparedness and resilience at the individual and communities levels will pay dividends during disasters in both life and property protection. MDEM stands ready to work closely with counties, state agencies, and non-profits like Maryland 2-1-1 to ensure the 3-1-1 system will be integrated into Maryland's overall preparedness and resilience strategy.

I appreciate the opportunity to share MDEM's position regarding this bill, and respectfully request a **favorable report on House Bill 1003**.

Sincerely,

Russell J. Strickland
Secretary
Maryland Department of Emergency Management