

MARY BETH CAROZZA
Legislative District 38
Somerset, Wicomico,
and Worcester Counties

Education, Energy, and
the Environment Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 316
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3645 · 301-858-3645
800-492-7122 Ext. 3645
Fax 410-841-3006 · 301-858-3006
MaryBeth.Carozza@senate.state.md.us

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

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The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee
SB 807 – Somerset County – Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services
Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza

Thank you Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and my fellow members of the distinguished Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 807 – Somerset County – Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Medical Services.

This local priority legislation would authorize the Somerset County Commissioners to establish a body to administer the county’s affairs relating to fire, rescue, and emergency medical services while maintaining the volunteer emergency services. The Somerset County Commissioners would also establish an Emergency Services Advisory Council to provide the County Commissioners with recommendations regarding the operations of fire suppression, emergency medical, and hazardous materials services in the county.

There are eight organized volunteer fire companies in Somerset County, including Crisfield, Princess Anne, Marion, Mt. Vernon, Fairmount, Deal Island, and Ewell and Tylerton (both on Smith Island). The only non-volunteer Fire and EMS station in Somerset County is the Lower Somerset County Ambulance and Rescue Squad, which highlights the fact the County’s volunteer fire companies carry a significant burden of protecting the constituents of Somerset County – and for all of our visitors coming to Somerset County for the many attractions and events held in Somerset County including the annual J. Millard Tawes Crab & Clam Bake in Crisfield, the ultimate political networking event in Maryland.

Currently, the Somerset County Commissioners do not have authority under the law to establish an Emergency Services Advisory Council and are required to appropriate funds to organized volunteer fire companies in the county through the Maryland General Assembly. This was done in 2018 for fiscal years 2019 through 2024 and I have introduced legislation this year for fiscal years 2025 through 2030 in order to allow the County Commissioners to continue to fund these important community organizations at an appropriate rate.

We want to empower our locals to support our fire, rescue, and emergency medical services in providing needed emergency services for both our residents and visitors alike. Fourteen other

counties and Baltimore City similar to this bill's proposed organizational structure, including Allegany, Calvert, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Garrett, Kent, Montgomery, Prince George's, Queen Anne's, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington, and Worcester.

I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 807, an important local public safety bill for Somerset County.