



## House Bill 865

### *Catastrophic Event Account - Transfer of Funds - State Disaster Recovery Fund*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 25, 2025

From: Kevin Kinnally and Charlotte Fleckenstein

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 865, which bolsters Maryland's disaster recovery framework by authorizing the transfer of funds from the Catastrophic Event Account to the State Disaster Recovery Fund under specified circumstances.

**By strengthening the State's capacity to rapidly deploy emergency resources, this bill ensures counties can provide timely assistance when federal aid is unavailable or delayed.**

The State Disaster Recovery Fund, established in 2023 with MACo's support, is an essential tool for local governments responding to emergencies. However, its effectiveness depends on adequate funding.

This bill provides a necessary mechanism to sustain this fund by allowing transfers from the Catastrophic Event Account when existing balances are insufficient. This approach ensures the State and local governments respond swiftly to disasters, reducing financial and operational strains on communities.

Counties serve as frontline responders when disasters strike, yet funding mechanisms remain fragmented, leading to delays in aid distribution. By creating a direct funding pathway between the Catastrophic Event Account and the State Disaster Recovery Fund, this bill helps local governments provide immediate assistance without waiting for uncertain federal support.

MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 865 to enhance Maryland's ability to deliver disaster relief and support counties in safeguarding communities.