

My name is Yvette Cross and I am the Emergency Services Director in Somerset County. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 719 – Somerset County Property Tax (Emergency Services Tax)

After approved legislation last year, Somerset County has continued to make changes to deliver the best possible service to the residents and visitors of Somerset County. The County has hired an EMS Division Coordinator who has been tasked with the building of a county run EMS system from the ground up. This will include the acquisition of ambulances, equipment and personnel (Paramedics and EMTs). The Coordinator will implement the recommendations for improvement to our current EMS system that were cited by the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services and the Somerset County EMS Task Force in 2023. In order to accomplish this, the proposed EMS tax will be needed to ensure that 24/7 EMS coverage can continue to be provided. Without the necessary funding, the safety of the citizens and visitors to Somerset County may be in jeopardy.

I sincerely thank you for your time and consideration.