

SB805-AFSCME Maryland-FAV.pdf

Uploaded by: Cindy Smalls

Position: FAV



1410 Bush Street (Suite A)
Baltimore, MD 21230
Phone: 410-547-1515
Email: info@afscmemd.org

Patrick Moran – President

**SB805 Public Safety - 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System –
Definition of First Responders**

**Education, Energy & Environment Committee
February 25th, 2025**

Favorable

Thank you, Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony on SB805. This bill seeks to expand the definition of "first responder" under the Public Safety Article to include emergency response technicians, facility maintenance technicians, and vehicle services and recovery technicians employed by the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT).

AFSCME Council 3 represents MDOT employees who serve the State of Maryland in a variety of critical roles, and we firmly believe that this bill will recognize the vital contributions of MDOT employees who work on the front lines of public safety. Expanding the definition of "first responder" to include these positions is not only a matter of fairness but also of public safety.

Emergency response technicians, facility maintenance technicians, and vehicle services and recovery technicians employed by MDOT are often the first to respond to incidents on our roads. These workers are integral in ensuring the safe and swift recovery of incidents, whether it's clearing accidents, performing essential maintenance to keep our roads operational, or responding to vehicle breakdowns. Their work directly supports emergency medical personnel, law enforcement, and fire rescue teams by ensuring that roads remain clear, safe, and accessible.

Many people are unaware that MDOT workers are often the first to respond during snowstorms, such as the one on Monday, January 6th, and other severe weather events. These dedicated employees play a crucial role in ensuring public safety and are on the frontlines performing essential tasks, including:

- **Snow and Ice Removal:** When a snowstorm hits, MDOT's highway maintenance crews are deployed immediately to clear roads, highways, and interstates. This includes spreading salt, sanding, and using plows to remove snow and ice. Their swift response helps prevent accidents and allows other emergency responders, such as fire, medical, and police teams, to safely reach affected areas.

- **Vehicle Assistance and Recovery:** MDOT vehicle services and recovery technicians are on standby during snowstorms to help with stranded vehicles. Whether it's a breakdown or an accident, these workers are essential in providing recovery and clearing vehicles from roads, ensuring that traffic can continue to flow safely and that emergency vehicles can pass through without obstruction. This is all under the Coordinated Highways Action Response Team (CHART).
- **Road Maintenance and Safety:** MDOT's facility maintenance technicians ensure that roads and infrastructure remain safe and operational during adverse weather conditions. This can involve monitoring road conditions, addressing structural issues that may be caused by the storm (such as ice dams, road collapses, or drainage problems), and making sure that road signs and signals are working properly, which is especially crucial during snow and ice events.

Job classifications within the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) include varied roles essential to maintaining public safety and infrastructure. An Emergency Response Technician (ERT) provides immediate support during emergencies, including assisting responders, managing hazardous materials, controlling traffic, and clearing debris. A Facility Maintenance Technician ensures the maintenance and safety of state highways, assists with lane closures, performs groundskeeping tasks like landscaping and snow removal, and coordinates with other departments for larger repair projects. The Vehicle Service and Recovery Technician (HEMT) handles roadside assistance and recovery for MDOT's fleet, ensuring equipment is in working order and aiding in vehicle recovery after accidents or incidents on state-owned roadways.

These dedicated workers frequently face hazardous conditions while performing their jobs in high-stress situations, often putting their safety at risk to ensure the safety and well-being of the public. Recognizing them as first responders is an important step in acknowledging their significant contributions to the public good and ensuring they receive the recognition and support they deserve.

HB805 will help ensure that the workers who are actively involved in the recovery and maintenance of our roadways are seen as essential to our emergency response infrastructure. By officially designating these MDOT employees as first responders, we can also provide them with the recognition, resources, and protections that are due to those who are essential to the safety and well-being of Maryland's citizens.

We urge the Committee to give a favorable report to SB805.

SB805Submit2025.pdf

Uploaded by: Michael Jackson

Position: FAV

MICHAEL A. JACKSON
Legislative District 27
Calvert, Charles and
Prince George's Counties

Budget and Taxation Committee

Subcommittees

Pensions

Procurement

Chair, Public Safety, Transportation,
and Environment



THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Miller Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Suite 3 West
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3700
800-492-7122 Ext. 3700
Michael.Jackson@senate.state.md.us

TESTIMONY – SENATE BILL 805
PUBLIC SAFETY – 9-1-1 EMERGENCY TELEPHONE SYSTEM –
DEFINITION OF FIRST RESPONDERS

EDUCATION, ENERGY, AND THE ENVIRONMENT
COMMITTEE

FEBRUARY 25, 2025

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Committee Members:

Senate Bill 805 is a very straightforward piece of legislation that adds three classifications of Maryland Department of Transportation employees to the “first responder” classification within the public safety article. These employees include emergency response technicians, facility maintenance technicians, and vehicle services and recovery technicians.

The aim of this legislation is to simply provide these public servants the classification of first responder due to the dangerous work that they do and the important role that they play in the public safety apparatus.

For the reasons listed above, I ask for a favorable report of Senate Bill 805.

Written Testimony SB805.pdf

Uploaded by: Joel McCrea

Position: UNF

MARYLAND STATE FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION

*Representing the Volunteer Fire, Rescue and Emergency Medical Services Personnel
-a 501(c)3 Organization*



Joel C. McCrea, P.P.
Legislative Committee
17 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(O) 410-974-2222
(C) 410-592-7759
Email: jmccrea@msfa.org

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Senator Brian J. Feldman, Chair
Senator Cheryl C. Kagan, Vice Chair
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

February 25, 2025

Subject: Opposing SB 805

Greetings from the Maryland State Firefighters Association, which represents over 350 volunteer fire, EMS, and rescue companies in the State of Maryland. Our men and women who volunteer at the fire, EMS, and rescue companies provide a vital service to their communities. Our First Responders are required to have professional training and specific certifications to respond to the emergencies and needs of others.

Our First Responders are dispatched by the 9-1-1 System to respond to emergencies where life or property are in peril. Our training prepares us to address the emergency, and our equipment and gear allow us to act in as safe a manner as possible. While the duties and job functions performed by the MDOT personnel defined in SB 805 are very important to their mission, we do not believe that they fall within the definition of a First Responder.

We therefore respectfully request an Unfavorable vote on SB805.

Respectfully submitted,

Joel C. McCrea

Joel C. McCrea
MSFA Legislative Committee

Letter for SB805.pdf

Uploaded by: Mike McKay

Position: UNF

MIKE MCKAY
Legislative District 1
Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties



Judicial Proceedings Committee
Executive Nominations Committee

Joint Committees
Administrative, Executive,
and Legislative Review
Children, Youth, and Families
Program Open Space and Agricultural
Land Preservation

THE SENATE OF MARYLAND
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Annapolis Office
James Senate Office Building
11 Bladen Street, Room 416
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
410-841-3565 • 301-858-3565
800-492-7122 Ext. 3565
Mike.McKay@senate.state.md.us

Cumberland Office
100N Mechanic Street
Cumberland, Maryland 21502
240-362-7040

Williamsport Office
2N Conococheque Street
Williamsport Town Hall
Williamsport, Maryland

January 20, 2025

RE: Fire/EMS Coalition Opposition to SB805

Dear Chairman Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Committee,

The Fire/EMS Coalition would like to express their opposition for Senate Bill 805:

Public Safety – 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System – Definition of First Responders. This bill alters the definition of the term “first responder” relating to the 911 emergency phone system. It will include emergency response technicians, facility maintenance technicians, and vehicle services and recovery technicians employed by the Maryland Department of Transportation.

The Fire/EMS Coalition opposes Senate Bill 805 for the simple fact that these workers and service technicians do not experience nor provide the same services that firefighters, paramedics, and police officers deal with on a regular basis.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mike McKay".

Senator Mike McKay
Representing the Appalachia Region of Maryland
Serving Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties

Voting Organizations:

Maryland Fire Chief's Association (MFCA)
Maryland State Firefighter's Association (MSFA)
State Fire Marshal (OSFM)
Maryland Fire Rescue Institute (MFRI)
Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services System (MIEMMS)
Metro Fire Chief's Association
Professional Firefighters of Maryland

Our Mission Statement

The Maryland Fire/EMS Coalition unites Republicans and Democrats in support of fire/emergency services legislation that benefit all first responders. Becoming a member does not require taking positions on legislation; rather Coalition members are asked to offer support in a way that best benefits fire/emergency services in their respective Legislative Districts.