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February 11, 2025

**TO:** The Honorable Joseline Pena-Melnyk  
Chair, Health and Government Operations Committee

**FROM:** Howard Barr  
Assistant Attorney General and Principal Counsel, Office of the Attorney  
General

**RE:** House Bill 376 – Maryland Cybersecurity Council - Membership –  
Alterations - **Support**

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The Office of the Attorney General respectfully urges this Committee to report favorably on **House Bill 376** - Maryland Cybersecurity Council - Membership – Alterations. **House Bill 376** alters the selection process of the chair of the Maryland Cybersecurity Council as well as the membership of the Council.

Presently, the Council is chaired by the Attorney General, who is charged with appointing a number of the Council’s outside of government members. The Council’s membership is broadly representative of Maryland government, including as members (among others), the Secretary of Information Technology; the Secretary of State Police; the Secretary of Commerce; the Adjutant General; the State Administrator of Elections, and the Secretary of Emergency Management and civil society, including individuals from the business, education, non-profit, and consumer interest sectors.

Among other things, the Council collaborates on cybersecurity issues, sponsors research, and recommends cyber-related policies for legislative consideration. The Council’s statutory charge includes several specific responsibilities and a broad mandate to consider emerging cybersecurity issues affecting the state and its residents.

While the Attorney General will continue to be a Council member, **House Bill 376** proposes that the Governor be responsible for appointing the members now appointed by the Attorney General and that the Chair be elected by the Council membership. The Attorney General, of course, is the Chief Legal Officer for the State and, together with the assistant attorneys general and professional staff who comprise the Office of the Attorney General, works to advise and represent the State and its constituent units across a wide variety programs and subject matter. The Attorney General is not intimately involved with cybersecurity issues and, because of that, believes it is in the Council's best interest that it be chaired by individuals more closely tied to that sector. For a similar reason, OAG believes it is not best positioned to appropriately appoint members to the Council.

Thank you for considering this testimony. For the foregoing reasons, the Office of the Attorney General urges a favorable report on **House Bill 376**.

cc: Health and Government Operations Committee members