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Education, Energy, and  
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**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**March 18, 2025**

**The House Ways and Means Committee**

**SB 719 – Somerset County – Property Tax – Emergency Services Tax**  
**Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you Chair Atterbear, Vice Chair Wilkins, and members of the distinguished Ways and Means Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 719 – Somerset County – Property Tax – Emergency Services Tax. Delegate Charles Otto (District 38A) is the sponsor of the House crossfile, House Bill 791.

This local, enabling legislation would allow the Board of Commissioners for Somerset County to impose an annual property tax to pay for all or part of the costs of Emergency Services in Somerset County, including fire, rescue, and emergency medical services. This annual fee would only be implemented following a public hearing with advance notice of the hearing. Several counties in Maryland already fund emergency services directly through the property tax, including Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Garrett, Howard, Kent, and Montgomery counties.

There are eight organized volunteer fire companies in Somerset County, including Ewell, Marion, Princess Anne, Tylerton, Fairmount, Crisfield, Deal Island, and Mt. Vernon. Earlier this year, the Princess Anne Volunteer Fire Company announced that it will not offer ambulance services to the community beginning July 1, 2025. Princess Anne covers half of Somerset, so this announcement was gravely concerning to our locals. The Somerset County Commissioners secured an extension of the services provided by the Princess Anne Volunteer Company until December 31, 2025 and is actively working on implementing a new Emergency Medical Services (EMS) plan for all residents.

SB 719 would help ensure long-term, stable funding for a reliable fire/EMS system that meets the needs of the community – and all of our visitors coming to Somerset County for the many attractions and events held in Somerset County.

This legislation is supported by the Somerset County Commissioners and Somerset County Emergency Services. I thank you for your kind attention and consideration, and respectfully request a favorable report on SB 719.