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FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS

HB 1501 - Department of Housing and Community Development - Homeless Shelter Certification Economic Matters

Maryland Department of Emergency Management
Hearing Date: 12 MAR 2026

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes **in favor with amendments** on HB 1501 - Department of Housing and Community Development - Homeless Shelter Certification.

HB 1501 would require the Department of Housing and Community Development to operate a certification program for homeless shelters; prohibit a certain homeless shelter from operating without a homeless shelter certification after a certain deadline; require the Department to develop certain requirements for certain homeless shelter certification classes; and require the Department to perform on-site monitoring of certain homeless shelters and implement a certain grievance process.

As written, “homeless shelter” includes seasonal emergency shelters and disaster/hazard emergency shelters or emergency mass care shelters. As a result, disaster shelters would not be permitted to operate without a certification after the applicable deadlines have passed.

Disasters are inherently unpredictable, with natural and human-caused impacts which may require altering pre-planned sheltering operations with little-to-no notice. Local and state emergency management organizations require flexibility to quickly shift from planned shelter locations to alternative based on various factors, including facility damages, limited access due to debris, or other hazards/safety concerns. The Department recommends carving out local or state government authorized seasonal emergency shelters and disaster shelters from this requirement to ensure local and state emergency management organizations have the ability to meet the needs of communities. We recommend the following amendments:

- Page 2, line 2, strike [A PART OF A COUNTY’S EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN AND THAT OPENS AT] and substitute “CREATED OR AUTHORIZED BY A LOCAL OR STATE GOVERNMENT ENTITY TO RESPOND TO”

- Page 2, line 4, after “DISASTER OR,” insert “MANMADE”
- Page 2, lines 14-15, strike [A DISASTER OR HAZARD EMERGENCY SHELTER OR EMERGENCY MASS CARE SHELTER]

In conclusion, MDEM urges a favorable report inclusive of the attached amendments for **HB 1501 - Department of Housing and Community Development - Homeless Shelter Certification**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: anna.sierra1@maryland.gov.