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Legislative District 21
Prince George's and
Anne Arundel Counties

Government, Labor, and
Elections Committee

Chair

Local Government/Bi-County
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

HB937 – WORKGROUP TO STUDY YOUTH CAMP AND RV PARK EMERGENCY

PREPAREDNESS – ESTABLISHED

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENT

GOOD AFTERNOON, CHAIR KORMAN, VICE CHAIR GUYTON, AND HONORABLE MEMBERS OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

FOR THE RECORD MY NAME IS MARY LEHMAN, REQUESTING A FAVORABLE REPORT ON HB937 - WORKGROUP TO STUDY YOUTH CAMP AND RV PARK EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.

LAST SUMMER, A MAJOR FLOOD IN KERR COUNTY TEXAS TOOK THE LIVES OF AT LEAST 120 PEOPLE AGES ONE TO 82. OF THOSE, 27 WERE YOUNG GIRLS AND COUNSELORS AT CAMP MYSTIC. THE OWNER OF THE CAMP DIED AS WELL. THE CAMP WAS IN A 100-YEAR FLOODPLAIN WHERE MOST OF THE LODGING WAS AT VERY LOW ELEVATION RELATIVE TO THE GUADALUPE RIVER, WHICH RUNS THROUGH THE PROPERTY. IN THE EARLY HOURS OF JULY 4TH, THE RIVER ROSE 26 FEET IN ABOUT 45 MINUTES. THERE WAS NO PLAN IN PLACE ON HOW TO EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY EVACUATE THE AREA.

GIVEN THE PROXIMITY OF MANY KIDS SUMMER CAMPS AND RV PARKS TO RIVERS AND LAKES, HB937 AIMS TO CREATE AN EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS WORKGROUP THAT WILL RESEARCH MODEL LOCAL AND STATE LAWS AND BY DECEMBER 31, 2027, RECOMMEND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS REQUIREMENTS FOR YOUTH CAMPS AND RV PARKS IN THE STATE OF MARYLAND. IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THE FOCUS OF THE WORKGROUP IS NOT INTENDED TO BE LIMITED TO FLOODING OR EVEN TO NATURAL DISASTERS. IT SHOULD CONSIDER MANMADE DISASTERS AS WELL.

ONCE THE WORK IS CONCLUDED, THE GROUP WILL RECOMMEND EMERGENCY READINESS AND RELATED POLICIES FOR YOUTH CAMPS AND RV PARKS TO THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

THE WORKGROUP WILL HAVE REPRESENTATIVES FROM:

THE MARYLAND GENERAL ASSEMBLY;

THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH, AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT;

THE STATE FIRE MARSHALL;

THE YOUTH CAMP SAFETY ADVISORY COUNCIL;

TWO OWNERS/MANAGERS OF YOUTH CAMPS; AND

TWO OWNERS/MANAGERS OF RV PARKS.

AMENDMENT: I AM SUBMITTING AN AMENDMENT TO DIRECT THE WORKGROUP TO SPECIFICALLY RESEARCH THE CONCEPT OF TWO, SEPARATE EMERGENCY WARNING SYSTEMS THAT DO NOT RELY ON THE SAME TECHNOLOGY TO ALERT CAMP AND RV PARK OWNERS OF EXTREME WEATHER OR OTHER DISASTERS. THAT WAY, IF ONE WARNING SYSTEM FAILS, THERE IS A SECOND SYSTEM ON WHICH CAMP/RV PARK OWNERS AND OPERATORS CAN RELY.

I URGE THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER THIS BILL AS A NEEDED REVIEW OF EXISTING MARYLAND POLICIES AND THE NEED FOR INCREASED SAFEGUARDS FOR YOUTH CAMPERS AND USERS OF MARYLAND'S RV PARKS IN THE EVENT OF A NATURAL OR MANMADE DISASTER.

I RESPECTFULLY ASK THE COMMITTEE FOR A FAVORABLE WITH THE AMENDMENT ON HB937.

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