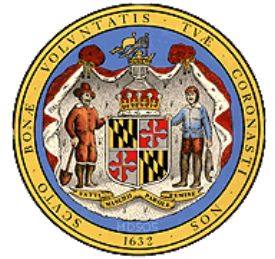




Governor's Office of Homeland Security
House Bill 1239
Public Safety - Critical Infrastructure Protection
Government, Labor and Elections Committee



To: House Government, Labor and Elections Committee
From: Marcia Deppen, *Director, Governor's Office of Homeland Security*
Date: 03/03/2026
Bill: House Bill 1239
Position: Favorable with Amendments

Chair Wells, Vice Chair Kerr, and Distinguished Members of the Government, Labor and Elections Committee:

My name is Marcia Deppen, and I serve as the interim Director of the Governor's Office of Homeland Security. I am here to testify in favor of House Bill 1239, which provides a framework for critical infrastructure protection within the State of Maryland.

In my role, I coordinate among federal, State and local partners that have responsibility for critical infrastructure protection from both physical and cyber threats.

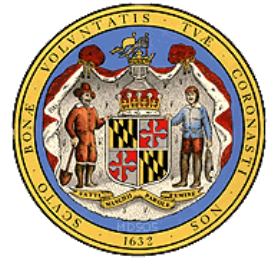
Critical infrastructure is vital to the fabric of our community. Everyday, facilities that house healthcare services, energy generation, transportation, and water and wastewater operations function behind the scenes to support the residents of Maryland. The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) have continually warned of foreign threat actors exploiting unpatched or outdated software, compromised internet-connected accounts and weak passwords. The result is stolen, leaked or encrypted data and systems taken offline. It is imperative that we protect and harden our critical infrastructures from these vulnerabilities.

This bill, with the suggested amendments, is extremely helpful in creating an integrated government approach to preparing, protecting and shielding our critical infrastructure. Defining the roles that each of our agencies play in the event of an attack on our Critical Infrastructure will bring clarity and consensus to a complex issue. Specifically, establishing the Maryland Coordination and Analysis Center (MCAC) Critical Infrastructure Branch and the Chief Critical Infrastructure Officer assigns ownership of the problem set to an entity which already has federal and State coordination.

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Further identifying the Department of Information Technology as the lead for cybersecurity protection aligns with the recently unveiled State's Cybersecurity and Privacy Policy. The Maryland Department of Emergency Management named to support cascading impacts that such an attack could afford our constituents aligns with the Consequence Management Operations Plan.

I assisted in drafting these amendments in consultation with DoIT, MDEM, and the MCAC to ensure a whole of government approach to critical infrastructure protection and a swift response to threats.

For all of these reasons, the Governor's Office of Homeland Security respectfully asks the committee for a **Favorable report on House Bill 1239, with the suggested amendments.**

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