



**CALVERT COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**

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Board of Commissioners
Earl F. Hance
Mike Hart
Thomas E. Hutchins
Kelly D. McConkey
Steven R. Weems

February 2, 2021

The Honorable Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 WestMiller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB645 - 9-1-1 Board – Procurement Reform

Senator Pinsky:

The Board of County Commissioners of Calvert County writes in opposition to Senate Bill 645. The passing of this bill proposes to solve a problem without showing that there is a problem to be solved, and usurps county authority to fulfill its responsibilities under Maryland law. Under Maryland Annotated Code, *Public Safety Article*, §1-304, each county has the responsibility of operating the 9-1-1 center in their jurisdiction. The counties are responsible for making procurements to fulfill their responsibilities using county law and procedure, consistent with County-level auditing, as well as independent auditing and additional review by the Maryland 9-1-1 Board.

The Maryland 9-1-1 Board already provides a review of requests for funding based on State law and policy in open session, in addition to any requirements for transparency of procurements in place at the County level. Senate Bill 645 creates a high level of insecurity in procurement of necessary projects. That is, the Maryland 9-1-1 Board could reject a county's reimbursement request for a project it approved, notwithstanding the county's reliance upon the project approval. This could leave the county financially liable for work already completed after initial funding approval.

Senate Bill 645 also includes a minority business participation objective without metrics to determine how or if that goal is achieved. While laudable to implement requirements for small, minority, women or veteran owned businesses, this uncertainty and, potentially, adds additional layers of cost, complexity and time. The nature of the 9-1-1 industry requires certain integration and service levels that can most often not be sustained by small businesses.

We ask that you take into consideration that 9-1-1 is stood-up and managed by the 24 counties in Maryland utilizing, partly, the 9-1-1 Trust Fund. The fund that is managed by Maryland's 9-1-1 Board is for those (24) 9-1-1 authorities. Certainty of project and project-funding approval is necessary for the safety of our citizens. Senate Bill 645 undermines the funding certainty we have today in a manner that could jeopardize a county's willingness to proceed at full financial risk to invest in system improvements and upgrades.

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Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact County Administrator Julian M. Willis at 410-535-1600, ext. 2202, County Attorney John Norris at 410-535-1600, ext. 2566, or Public Safety Director Jacqueline Vaughan at 410-535-1600, ext. 2303. Thank you for your kind consideration of our position regarding this important Bill.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
CALVERT COUNTY, MARYLAND



Earl F. Hance, President



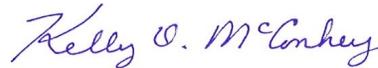
Steven R. Weems, Vice President



Mike Hart



Thomas E. Hutchins



Kelly D. McConkey

cc: Senator Jack Bailey
Senator Michael A. Jackson
Calvert County Delegation