



House Bill 6

Public Safety – 9-1-1 Fees - Audits

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Health & Government Operations Committee

Date: January 29, 2020

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 6. This bill establishes the necessary framework to ensure that 9-1-1 fees are collected and remitted in accordance with state law.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed landmark legislation to update state laws and the 9-1-1 financing system to provide the flexibility and resources needed for the deployment of a statewide Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) system that our residents expect and deserve. As Maryland accelerates its move toward NG911, this process will assure that telecommunications providers are properly collecting and remitting 9-1-1 fees.

Telecommunications providers collect and remit monthly the state 9-1-1 fee and the county charge to the Comptroller for deposit into the 9-1-1 Trust Fund. Counties rely on the state fee revenues to fund capital enhancements to county 9-1-1 systems. The county charge revenues are distributed quarterly to each jurisdiction in order to fund county 9-1-1 operational costs.

HB 6 requires telecommunications providers to keep records of 9-1-1 fees collected and remitted for at least four years. The Comptroller, in consultation with the Emergency Number Systems Board (ENSB), will adopt procedures for auditing the collection and remittance of state and local 9-1-1 fees. Additionally, the bill requires the Comptroller to develop and distribute training materials to all providers detailing Maryland's 9-1-1 fee structure, and any associated auditing procedures.

HB 6 properly shifts auditing responsibilities to the Office of the Comptroller, which has the data, tools, and staff expertise to ensure appropriate oversight of Maryland's 9-1-1 Trust Fund. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 6.