



Senate Bill 466

Public Safety – 9-1-1 Emergency Telephone System – Revisions (Carl Henn's Law)

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

Date: February 14, 2017

To: Finance Committee

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 466 **with AMENDMENTS**. This bill would help Maryland prepare for a Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG911) system that our residents expect and deserve.

Maryland's 9-1-1 system enables the public to place voice calls requesting emergency assistance. This is an important and reliable service that saves lives, but it has serious limitations. The vision of an NG911 system is to enable the public to make voice, text, or video calls from any communications device via Internet Protocol-based networks. These capabilities can make public safety both more effective and more responsive.

The transition to NG911 cannot be achieved without significant funding to upgrade our existing 9-1-1 equipment and communications systems, which are already under-funded through existing user fees. SB 466 would conform Maryland's fee structure to that of virtually every other state, and would provide an additional revenue source to offset 9-1-1 operational costs and for the transition to NG911. While this funding is critical, MACo believes subjecting state and local governments to increased 9-1-1 fees is counterproductive.

This bill would also create a workers' compensation public safety occupational disease presumption for 9-1-1 call center employees. The fiscal note indicates that would likely impose a significant fiscal cost on both the State and county governments. Given significant reductions in direct State Aid to Local Governments and struggling local revenues, counties cannot afford another expensive unfunded mandate.

With these proposed amendments, MACo believes that SB 466 will enhance public safety communications in Maryland and in our local communities. Accordingly, MACo recommends the Committee issue a report of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS** on SB 466.

MACo Proposed Amendments for SB 466

AMENDMENT NO. 1

(Deletes the worker's compensation presumption language from the bill)

On page 2, strike in their entirety lines 6 through 10, inclusive.

On pages 2 through 4, strike in their entirety the lines beginning with line 24 on page 2 through line 15 on page 4, inclusive.

AMENDMENT NO. 2

(Modifies the "per line" language in § 1-311 of the Public Safety Article)

On page 14, in line 14, after "(c)" insert:

"(1) FOR A UNIT OF STATE OR LOCAL GOVERNMENT, THE 9-1-1 FEE IS 25 CENTS PER MONTH, PAYABLE WHEN THE BILL FOR THE TELEPHONE SERVICE OR CMRS OR OTHER 9-1-1 ACCESSIBLE SERVICE IS DUE.

(2)".