



House Bill 70

Criminal Law - Interference With a Public Safety Answering Point - Penalties

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Judiciary Committee

Date: January 23, 2024

From: Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 70. This bill would bolster state laws to protect against sophisticated cyber-attacks that pose a significant threat to the security and stability of Maryland's 9-1-1 system.

In 2019, the General Assembly passed Carl Henn's Law, 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 Maryland residents expect and deserve. As Maryland continues the move toward NG911, proper safeguards are necessary to protect against new and evolving cyber threats, including denial-of-service attacks and intrusions by malicious hackers.

HB 70 generally prohibits any actions that intend to interrupt or impair the functioning of a 9-1-1 center. Under the bill, if an individual commits a prohibited act that intends to interrupt the operations of a 9-1-1 center, the person is guilty of a felony and subject to imprisonment for up to five years and/or a fine up to \$25,000. In addition, if an individual perpetrates an illegal act that disrupts the operations of a 9-1-1 center, the violator is guilty of a felony, punishable by imprisonment for up to ten years and/or a \$50,000 maximum fine.

Hackers are increasingly targeting state and local governments – including public safety agencies – with sophisticated cyberattacks that can jeopardize sensitive information and disrupt emergency services. By strengthening state laws to protect against growing and evolving cyber threats, HB 70 would enhance public safety communications in Maryland and in our local communities.

For these reasons, MACo urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 70.