



**Baltimore City Office of
Emergency Management**
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Brandon M. Scott
Mayor
City of Baltimore

Chief James Wallace
Emergency Manager
Office of Emergency Management

To: Honorable President Mosby, and Honorable Members of the Baltimore City Council

Room 400 City Hall

From: Chief James Wallace, Director, Office of Emergency Management

501 N. Calvert St - Emergency Operations Center (EOC)

Date: March 16, 2023

RE: Council Bill 21-0074 – Office of Emergency Management - Independent Agency

The Office of Emergency is in opposition to Council Bill 21-0074 and looks forward to a discussion with the committee. Outlined below are a few high level points to consider.

It is a jurisdiction-based decision as to where the Office of Emergency Management lives within the government structure. In places such as Baltimore County, Howard County and Philadelphia the Office of Emergency Management is embedded with the Fire Department. There is no standard or best practice.

Baltimore is a busy, urban, and dense locale and OEM benefits from being embedded within a large and emergency response-based agency.

In addition to the essential support provided by the Fire Department for fiscal/grant management, human resources, fleet, and logistics; the Office of Emergency Management benefits from utilizing sworn and specifically trained members of the Fire Department to serve as Duty Officers. These Duty Officers (approximately 20) serve on a rotating 24-hour basis and ensure OEM can respond to any large-scale event in need of a higher level of coordination.

At present, OEM has sworn members of the Fire Department in essential leadership roles – this includes both the Director and Deputy Director for Operations. Almost all of the remaining staff are grant funded staff (funded just 10 positions) working in the areas of Planning & Preparation.

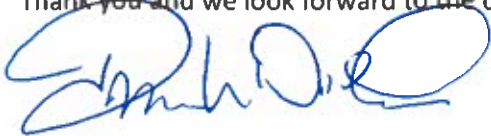
Without consideration of these factors – a creation of an independent agency would inhibit OEM's ability to function at the level needed or required for this City.

There are outdated elements of the bill including the requirement of an independent OEM to include certain Emergency Support Functions in the Emergency Operations Plan. OEM is currently in the process of finalizing function annexes as a part of the EOP. The development of annexes is aligned with the Maryland Department of Emergency Management and other jurisdictions in the State, as well as surrounding states. The subject matter of these annexes does not differ from those listed in the

legislation. Nearly 70% of those annexes have already been updated by OEM for the first time since 2013.

Over the last two years, OEM has provided technical support to all City agencies in the development of Continuity of Operations plans – 70% of all agencies have complete plans of March 2023. Prior to this effort many agencies had old plans dating as far back as 2006 or had never completed one.

Thank you and we look forward to the discussion on March 22nd.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Wallace", written over the text of the previous paragraph.

Deputy Chief James Wallace
Director, Office of Emergency Management

JW/eg