

**FROM: Russell Strickland, Maryland Emergency Management Agency**

November 30, 2020

The Honorable Larry Hogan  
Governor of Maryland  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

The Honorable William C. "Bill" Ferguson IV  
President of the Senate  
State House, H-107  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

The Honorable Adrienne Jones  
Speaker of the House of Delegates  
State House, H-101  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**RE: 2020 Annual Report of the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council**

Dear Governor Hogan, President Ferguson, and Speaker Jones:

On behalf of Chairman Ronald Gill and in compliance with Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (e), we are pleased to submit the 2020 Annual Report of the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council to the General Assembly. This report provides information on the Council's activities over the 2020 calendar year and the future direction for 2021.

MEMA has a long tradition of providing staff support to the Council. As such, should you have any questions relating to the information provided in this report, please feel free to send inquiries to [russell.strickland@maryland.gov](mailto:russell.strickland@maryland.gov) or [regill@co.pg.md.us](mailto:regill@co.pg.md.us).

Sincerely,

Russell Strickland  
Executive Director

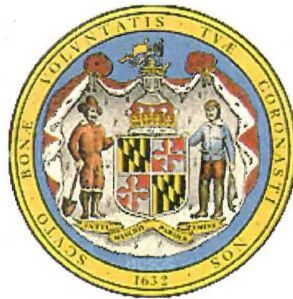
cc: Sarah Albert, Department of Legislative Services (5 copies)

# 2020 Annual Report of the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council

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*A Report to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly*

In compliance with Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (e)



## Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary	3
II.	Purpose, Mission, and Scope of Work	4
III.	Chairman and Membership	4
IV.	Activities and Topics During 2020	6
	A. February 20, 2020 Quarterly Meeting	6
	B. May 12, 2020 Quarterly Meeting	7
	C. August 24, 2020 Quarterly Meeting	9
	D. November 24, 2020 Quarterly Meeting	12
V.	Prospective Outlook for 2021	19
	A. Overview	19
	B. Upcoming Meetings	19
VI.	Conclusion	19

## I. Executive Summary

In accordance with Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (a) and (d), the GEMAC is authorized to advise the Governor on all matters that relate to emergency management in Maryland. During the 2020 calendar year (CY20), the GEMAC, with a new Chair and a predominately new membership, built upon legacy work executed by the previous GEMAC memberships from 2017-2019.

The GEMAC began the year with an in-depth historical review of the genesis and purpose of the GEMAC, tracing its lineage from the Maryland Preparedness and Survey Commission of 1916 to the formation of the modern GEMAC through key legislation and executive orders in 1981 and 1987<sup>1</sup>. This historical review was complemented by a deep dive into specific and thematic work efforts of the Council across the last 20 years. This discussion gave context and purpose to a capstone review of a proposed CY20 workplan with various topics and lines of effort that could be pursued by the incoming GEMAC<sup>2</sup>.

This first meeting set the tone for the rest of the year; and, despite the ongoing COVID19 pandemic, the GEMAC successfully completed several major initiatives including:

- Submitted a recommendation to the Governor's Office advising the creation of a state-managed disaster assistance fund to assist local and state governments with the anticipated costs of recovery, in particular the subsidization of federal disaster assistance program cost share requirements and exploring opportunities to alleviate eligible cost burdens for local/state disaster recovery activities that do not meet federal assistance thresholds.
- Facilitated an impressive Maryland State cyber preparedness/cyber security panel with guest speakers from MEMA, MD ANG, DoIT, MSP, MCAC, and MD GOHS.
- Established a common digital information and communication repository (i.e., Microsoft Teams) for the GEMAC, while utilizing UMB information technology infrastructure at no cost.
- Created a GEMAC Legislative Affairs Subcommittee to discuss and monitor current and proposed emergency management legislation and empower the GEMAC to develop recommendations for the Governor evaluating the merit, gaps, opportunities, and potential courses of action on current, proposed, and future legislation germane to the emergency management discipline.

In collaboration with the Maryland Emergency Management Agency (MEMA), the GEMAC continues to provide value to the Maryland State Executive Branch by offering an independent, non-partisan, and holistic perspective to a wide array of emergency management topics. As always, the GEMAC strives to remain agile and relevant in the emergency management discipline and continues to actively serve the Governor, his office, and his designated homeland security/emergency management representatives in an advisory capacity.

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<sup>1</sup> Presentation may be provided upon request.

<sup>2</sup> The workplan was predicated upon a CY19 analysis referred to as the "What Keeps You Up At Night" analysis. This analysis surveyed senior Maryland emergency management executives, at all levels of government, to determine the most pressing threats to the State. Findings and data may be provided upon request.

## **II. Purpose, Mission, and Scope of Work**

The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) is authorized by statute and is charged with advising the Governor on all matters that relate to emergency management in Maryland.<sup>3</sup> In addition, Executive Order 01.01.1987.11 designates the GEMAC as Maryland's State Emergency Response Commission<sup>4</sup> (SERC) in accordance with Title III of the Federal Superfund Amendments.

A primary focus of the State's overarching emergency management strategy is a whole-community approach, working not only with government stakeholders at the federal, state, and local levels, but also with non-governmental organizations, private sector partners, communities, and individuals throughout the emergency management system. In keeping with this whole-community approach, the GEMAC brings together subject matter experts from a wide range of disciplines, backgrounds, and geographic areas to discuss and develop specific recommendations for further study or investigation. As an independent advisory body, GEMAC members are given the opportunity to provide input and comment on the State's activities in moving Maryland forward and developing a comprehensive emergency management program.

## **III. Chairman and Membership**

By law, the GEMAC must include: fair and reasonable representation for local government; representation for organizations that represent volunteer firefighters and rescue squads; and representation from manufacturing, utilities, and communications industries. There is no size limit or minimum membership requirement for the GEMAC; individuals appointed to the GEMAC serve two year terms.

The Chairman of the GEMAC is Ronald Gill, Director of Emergency Management and Deputy Director of Homeland Security, Prince George's County. The current GEMAC is composed of 23 members, including the Chairman. Current GEMAC members began their terms in January 2020 with a two-year term commitment.

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<sup>3</sup> Maryland Code Annotated, Public Safety Article, §§ 14-105 (a) and (d)

<sup>4</sup> Code of Maryland Regulations 01.01.1987.11

GOVERNOR'S EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL		
#	Name	Title
1	Ronald Gill (Chairman)	Director Emergency Management/Deputy Director Homeland Security, Prince George's County
2	Jonathan Bratt	Executive Director, UMB, Office of Emergency Management
3	Mike Berna	Maryland Fire Chiefs Association
4	Douglas Brown	Deputy Director, Carroll County Department of Public Works
5	Timothy Cameron	Sheriff, St. Mary's County
6	Jonathan Dayton	Maryland State Firemen's Association
7	Jonathan Favorite	Director of Technical Services, Communications Electronics, Inc.
8	Dwayne Freeman	Director of High Homeland Security, Washington County Public Schools
9	Tiffany Green	Fire Chief, Prince George's County Fire and EMS Department
10	Adrian Grieve	Division Disaster State Relations Director (PA, MD, DE, DC & FEMA RIII), American Red Cross
11	Earl Hance	Commissioner, Calvert County
12	Jasper Jones	Budget Analyst, USDOT
13	Joseph LaFleur	Manager, Crisis Management/Business Continuity/IT Disaster Recovery, GP Strategies Corporation
14	Jennifer Martin	Deputy Commissioner, Population Health and Disease Prevention, Baltimore City Health Department
15	Ryan Miller	Principal, Critical Functions, LLC
16	Thomas Moran	Executive Director, All Hazards Consortium
17	Robert Poole	Retired Special Agent, FBI; ODNI, Insider Threat SME
18	Anna Sierra	Director, Caroline County Department of Emergency Services
19	Kevin Simmons	Director, Office of Emergency Management, City of Annapolis
20	Clay Stamp	County Manager, Talbot County
21	Bruce Wahl	Former Mayor, Chesapeake Beach
22	Stephen Wantz	Commissioner, Carroll County
23	David Willenborg	Sr. Engineer, Technical Support, Department of Defense/NAVAIR
24	Marverly Nettles	Exercise Planner, Government Consulting Firm

## IV. Activities and Topics During 2020

### A. February 20, 2020 Quarterly Meeting

The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) meeting began with a Call to Order from Chairman Ronald Gill. He provided an overview of the meeting's purpose, objectives, and outcomes.

There was a brief Meet and Greet and an opportunity to gather all necessary administrative information.

Maryland State National Capital Region Program Manager, Blake Langford provided a briefing on GEMAC history and led the following discussions:

- GEMAC CY20 Workplan Review
  - Prompted by the workplan suggestion of a cybersecurity agenda
  - The group discussed the challenges and concerns of cybersecurity
    - Engaging with the legislative branch would increase situational awareness
    - However, the group discussed the sensitivity and importance around advising the Office of the Governor
    - The council agreed to use a poll in order to reevaluate the group's top priorities based upon the prior year's analysis
  - The GEMAC as well as the Chairman determined cybersecurity will be a future meeting agenda item.
    - Prepared to discuss the concern of a whole government response to cyber threats.
- State-Managed Emergency Management Fund
  - Discussed the potential of recommending the institution of a State-Managed Disaster Assistance fund to the Office of the Governor
    - Fund should support local and state disaster assistance activities.
    - Staff support will analyze the federal, state, and large non-profit disaster grant cost-share models.
    - Analysis of cost-share models will provide understanding of the need for the state to assist entities in meeting the 75-25 percent federal cost share.
    - Investigate at any cost-share models that may exist with state and non-profit grants.
  - Other proposed recommendations include:
    - Expanding the definition for the use of funds to support activities (cyber threats, civil unrest, etc.).
    - Generating revenue for the fund.
    - Determining policy that explains who has access to the fund.

MEMA Executive Director, Russell Strickland provided an overview of strategic topics pertinent to Maryland State emergency management.

- Strategic Emergency Management (EM) Briefing
  - Director Strickland discussed the EM Senate and House of Representatives bills that were in session.

- There was a discussion around the challenges regarding the cyber issue due to the volume of bills generated from the topic.
- During the next cyber meeting, GEMAC will discuss the importance of identifying gaps in the current statewide cyber disruption plan.

GEMAC Chairman, Ronald Gill led the Group Roundtable discussion, where the members provided updates relevant to their organization.

- Executive Director UMB Office of Emergency Management, Jonathan Bratt, offered UMB's knowledge management system in order to assist the GEMAC in securing a knowledge repository.

Shortly after, GEMAC Chairman Ronald Gill reviewed the group's decision points and next steps

- A decision was made to hold a poll on topics for future meetings based upon the "What Keeps You Up at Night?" analysis.
- Staff will draft a recommendation for the Emergency Management Fund based upon the GEMAC's suggested methodology.
- Coordinate with Jonathan Bratt to explore the opportunity of utilizing UMB SharePoint.
- Explore the viability of establishing regular WebEx meetings to keep conversations active
- Next GEMAC meeting will be in May 2020.

The council was adjourned at 1500 hours.

#### B. May 12, 2020 Quarterly Meeting

The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) meeting began with the following objectives:

- Adjudicate and resolve State Emergency Response Commissions (SERC) business.
  - No outstanding updates or action items for GEMAC currently
- COVID-19 briefing from MEMA Executive Director and Prince George's County Emergency Management

MEMA Executive Director Russell Strickland provided a high-level overview of the state response to COVID-19

- Response actions were in preparation in January 2020, however the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated in early March 2020.
- SEOC was operational 7 days a week 0700-1700 hours
- Three focus areas for the operation:
  - Resource Management
  - Messaging through the Joint Information Center (JIC)
  - Coordination with the Private Sector, Non-Governmental Services, including Volunteers and Donations Management
- Coordination with state agencies Maryland Department of Health (MDH), Maryland Institute for Emergency Medical Services Systems (MIEMSS), and Department of General Services (DGS) played an important role during the activation.



- This event was unique with the creation of the many different task forces (Hospital Surge, Feeding Cell, Poultry Task Force).
- Due to the nature of the event, the term “demobilization” was reevaluated. “Restaging” was deemed more appropriate to allow the availability of resources should a resurgence occur.
- COVID-19 caused financial challenges regarding the state budget.

Prince George’s County Emergency Management also gave a high-level brief to characterize local emergency management actions in response to COVID-19.

- Provided a snapshot of COVID-19 statistics including deaths, hospitalizations, and ICU capacity.
- Highlighted the concern that Prince George’s county has a population of approximately one million residents but has a less than required hospital infrastructure.
- In comparison to Baltimore, which has 11 systems, Prince George’s county only has 4 systems, and all are satellite campuses.
- Operations started at the hospital operations centers, then eventually transitioned to the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).
- Prince George’s county benefited from having their 9-1-1 centers embedded in their EOC which is handling an average of 9 to 11 calls a day.
- Office of Emergency Management (OEM) worked hand in hand with lead doctors from the start of the event
- OEM held a discussion with California (King County and Los Angeles) to understand best practices
- Prince George’s county OEM had the following task forces activated:
  - Testing Task Force
  - Fiscal Management Task Force
  - Government Operations Task Force
- Local are experiencing budget reductions similar to the state
- Reported Governor’s reopening plan was slightly premature from a local government perspective.

Following the COVID-19 updates, the Group Discussion was held, giving members the opportunity to comment on the previous briefs. A summary of the remarks is below.

- COVID-19 has provided an exciting opportunity in Emergency Management (EM) to support the organization of the event moving forward. May see legislation similar to the Katrina era.
- EM has established a mutual trust in the local jurisdiction to assist in non-traditional situations.
- The group agreed it was beneficial in holding a discussion with California counties, GEMAC Chairman Ronald Gill will send meeting minutes to share best practices.

GEMAC Chairman Ronald Gill led Group Updates and Next Steps.

- Members discussed scheduling the next GEMAC meeting for next quarter
- Decisions were made to collect thoughts as they navigate this event and provide any thoughts that include future legislative action.

The council was adjourned at 1130 hours.

### C. August 24, 2020 Quarterly Meeting

The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) meeting began with welcome and announcements from Chairman Ronald Gill.

GEMAC, State Emergency Response Commission Subcommittee (SERC) Chairman, Douglas Brown, provided a refresher on SERC mission and objectives.

- Chairman Brown provided a brief overview of SERC and discussed SERC business
- SERC endorsed the recommendation of Valerie Hawkins
  - GEMAC voted to endorse Valeria Hawkins as well

Maryland State National Capital Region Program Manager, Blake Langford led the Cyber Security Panel.

- The objectives of the panel were to hold a discussion regarding the structure of cyber security and preparedness within Maryland State Government, common challenges and best practices, and the future of cyber security and preparedness in Maryland. The panelists were as follows:
  - Lt. Col. Thomas A. Herster, J6, MD ANG
  - Chip Stewart, State CISO, DoIT
  - Sgt. John Bedell, Supervisor- Computer Crimes Digital Forensic Lab, MSP
  - Bryant Wu, Senior Intelligence Analyst, MCAC
  - Brian Bauer, Preparedness Branch Manager, MEMA
- The following is a summary of the topics and the discussion held during the panel:
  - Highlighted the importance of immediate response functions and coordination of mission assignments
    - DoIT would likely be the lead agency for a large-scale cyber event and not MCAC or MEMA which serves as a coordinating body.
    - Maryland State Police (MSP) have anticipated impacts and are able to share with local jurisdictions who need that resource
  - Regarding election security and cyber security, the Maryland network is secure through the work of cyber command and Department of Homeland Security.
    - The state has worked closely with federal partners, MCAC, and State Board of Elections (SBE) to ensure the threat of cyber insecurity is minimal.
  - There was discussion around the challenges during a cyber security event which included communication and misconfigured IT trackers.
    - Having a well-developed relationship between Emergency Managers and Cyber offices is key. Highlighted the importance of relaying clear, correct, and validated information to the right people.
    - DoIT has a process in place for non-law enforcement participants in state activity, however there is no dedicated insider threat committee. Will consider this program for future events.
    - Best practices to follow guidelines for configurations, turning off unused or unnecessary devices, and placing a scanning patch on devices.

- Regarding training and exercise, DoIT utilizes NIST, however MEMA takes the lead providing a variety of federal and state developed trainings.
- During a cyber event, the challenges in displaying a comprehensive localized picture specific to Maryland are:
  - Collecting instant data between organizations
  - Prioritization of cyber security among non-technical executive leaders
- Challenges for MSP during cyber events
  - Cyber crimes are becoming more popular
  - Lack of awareness around cyber threats
  - Early coordination with other state agencies
- Challenges highlighted from MEMA
  - Relationships among the important parties involved and standing coordinating bodies
  - Requiring small offices to dedicate time and finances will be difficult
  - Trained IT developed teams
  - Addressing cyber disruption in other hazards and incidents
- State CISO, DoIT, Chip Stewart provided a brief overview of cyber events
  - Number of events that occurred from March 2020- current is on track from the previous year
  - Weekends, holidays, special events are higher risks for cyber threats
  - Having preventative measures in place are key such as managing service providers and bringing awareness to cyber security threats
- Recommendations for GEMAC include
  - Concerns around privacy data handling
  - Discussion around having a data privacy expert on the committee
  - Challenges regarding turnover rates and salary adjustments

There was an opportunity for members to provide relevant COVID-19 updates and comments.

- *Prince George's County- Ronald Gill*
  - 26,000 cases, 4.41% positivity rate
  - Started an ambassadors program and currently holding inspections on a regular basis
  - Ensuring citizens are compliant with guidelines, especially with colleges/universities opening
  - Working with schools regarding reopening plans. Most schools will have virtual instruction.
- *City of Annapolis- Kevin Simmons*
  - Annapolis has an overall positivity rate of 3.0%
  - Reaching out to Latino community as they are disproportionately affected by COVID-19, also largest population in Annapolis

- Created pop-up testing as well the health initiative, which is a combination of fire, police, social services, food services, etc.
- COVID-19 compliance
  - 1st violation, education
  - 2nd violation, \$500 fine
- Most schools are providing virtual/online education
- *MEMA- Chas Eby*
  - Maryland Department of Health (MDH) remains focused on contact tracing and supporting hospitals and long-term care facilities. They began shifting focus on higher education
  - MEMA asked to lead a new task force for outreach supportive programs for African American and Hispanic communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19.
  - Maryland Joint Operations Center (MJOC) operates the 24/7 Prevent COVID compliance hotline that is open to the public by phone and email. They serve as the main contact and will provide information to other responding state agencies.
  - MEMA's biggest role will be the recovery effort as well as FEMA public assistance.
- *Washington County- Dyane Freeman*
  - 12,131 cases; 7 hospitalized; 724 released from hospital; 32 confirmed deaths
  - Schools will be virtual
- *Carroll County- Doug Brown*
  - 0.96% positivity rate with testing
  - Managing warehouse operations, as they become a point of operation for logistics
- *Baltimore City Health Department- Jennifer Martin*
  - Experienced a second peak of cases similar to other jurisdictions
  - Engaged with mobile testing and focused on accessibility within vulnerable neighborhoods.
  - Preparing for the opening of colleges/universities. Public schools are virtual until October
  - Organizing for Fall testing
- *UMB Office of Emergency Management- Jonathan Bratt*
  - Leading the University of Maryland Systems Unified group.
  - Over the last months, they stood up the convention center as a COVID treatment site, testing site, and now mass vaccination site
  - Stood up multi center clinical trials regarding potential vaccines
  - Providing 1000 COVID testing a day, with a 12-26 hour turnaround
  - Partnered with MIEMSS and supporting testing at other universities
  - Bringing UMBC and College Park online
  - Campus operations are teleworking, and instruction will be virtual
- *Allegany County- Jonathan Dayton*
  - Will continue testing; Allegany and Garrett county schools will be virtual
- *Crisis Management, GP Strategy Corporation- Joseph LaFleur*
  - CDC dropped 14-day quarantine, hoping Maryland will provide clarifying statement from the Governor's office
- *Critical Functions- Ryan Miller*

- Explained the Maryland Manufacturing extension program and network which brings together PPE and COVID related supplies. Additional information can be found at <https://marylandmanufacturingnetwork.com/>
- *Maryland National Guard- BG Flasch*
  - The Guard will continue working with MEMA and MDH as well as other state agencies

Shortly after the COVID-19 updates, GEMAC held a brief Group Roundtable.

- Emergency Management Fund Memo
  - Questions generated from this topic include:
    - Is there any legislation on this topic?
    - How do we get this topic into legislation?
    - Process could include sending this to Pete Landon who would circulate it then have it funneled back to MEMA.
    - Hoping the GEMAC can move this initiative quicker as there is not a large amount of money under the circumstances.

GEMAC Staff Support, Myra Derbyshire and Blake Langford led Staff Updates and Next Steps for the group.

- UMB Office of Emergency Management, Jonathan Bratt, emphasized that GEMAC's next meeting agenda item should have proposed legislation for discussion.
- Any legislation in the past that may have needed future legislation, please highlight for all members to be prepared for the next session.

The Council adjourned 1441 hours.

#### D. November 24, 2020 Quarterly Meeting

The Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council (GEMAC) meeting began with a welcome and announcements from Chairman Ronald Gill.

GEMAC, State Emergency Response Commission Subcommittee (SERC) Chairman, Douglas Brown, provided an update regarding SERC business.

- SERC committee recommended approval for a 3-year term reappointment of the following individuals to the Local Emergency Planning Commission (LEPC) in Talbot County:
  - Dr. Kelly Griffin, Superintendent Talbot County Public Schools
  - Christopher Durham, Public Health Emergency Planner, Talbot County Health Department
  - Micah Risher, Manager Eastern Airport
  - Anthony Smith, Chief, St. Michael's Police Department
  - In addition, the Talbot County council recommended one new appointment for a 3-year term:
    - Donald Cooper, Security Eastern Middle School
- SERC has endorsed the recommendation of those individuals to the LEPC in Talbot County
- GEMAC voted and recommended those individuals as well

Chairman Ronald Gill provided a brief update on the State-Managed Disaster Assistance Fund Memo.

- Generally, the memo was received well, however it may be too late for submission in this year's budget.
- Currently, the memo has been submitted and we are waiting for feedback from the Governor's office.
- Secretary David Brinkley, Maryland Department of Budget and Management as well as Pete Landon, Deputy Chief of Staff Maryland Governor's Office of Homeland Security will support and assist the GEMAC to propose the item for next year's budget cycle.
- National Capital Region (NCR) Program Manager, MEMA, Blake Langford provided a brief overview of the memo:
  - The memo proposed the creation of a disaster assistance fund which could potentially finance a portion of the cost-share for federal disasters as well as disasters that had a significant impact on a locality but did not meet the federal disaster threshold.

Review of 2020 EM Legislation & A Look Behind and A Look Ahead was led by NCR Program Manager, Blake Langford. The purpose of this discussion is to review recent EM legislation and past GEMAC efforts with legislative impact. The intended outcome is to gain situational awareness on current legislative efforts to better utilize future council time and efforts. Unfortunately, we were unable to locate pre-filed legislation for 2021, therefore the council reviewed 2020 legislation.

- 2020 Session Legislation
  - MEMA sponsored 3 bills that passed, and 1 bill that failed due to lack of time for the submission process. (p)- passed; (f)- failed
    - HB648/CH288 (P) – generally clarifies the responsibilities of MEMA and makes procedural and technical changes
    - SB80/CH287 (P) – Renamed MEMAC to MIEMAC. Made changes to provisions of the compact.
    - SB81/CH516 (P) – Requires each principal department of the Executive Branch to develop a continuity of operations plan. Establishes MEMA as the coordinating and adjudicating entity.
    - HB650 (F) – expanded Governor authority during a state of emergency and authorized the Governor to issue an enhanced coordination order which allowed the Governor to take special actions prior to a disaster (e.g., pre-positioning resources, evacuations)
  - *Chas Eby, Deputy Executive Director, MEMA* provided clarification regarding the first three bills passed:
    - The law now states that any incident that requires two or more state agencies response outside of daily incidents, requires MEMA coordination.
    - In addition to the name change within the second bill, it removed the burden from local jurisdictions declaring a local state of emergency in order to participate in MIEMAC.
    - For the third bill, the law now requires MEMA coordination of COOP plans at the state level for principal departments.
  - The following discussion was generated from the 4 MEMA sponsored bills:

- Although the law itself does not require non-Executive agencies to have COOP plans, MEMA will provide templates as well as working sessions for those agencies who are required to have COOP plans and for those agencies that are not required
  - Regarding COVID impacting the fourth bill, MEMA believes the passing of the first bill that requires MEMA to help coordinate large scale incidents, like COVID is key. Events like COVID require a coordinating body and certainly the Governor's office was on board with MEMA establishing a multiagency coordination (MAC). MEMA has created a MAC with MDH and other pertinent agencies for COVID, therefore in practice, it is happening due to COVID operations. While Public Health is bearing much of the response and their subject expertise is most critical, MEMA and other agencies have been involved and coordinating where we are expert. Therefore, he believes the first bill will help with incidents in the future like COVID.
- Blake Langford continued with the other bills of note:
  - SB721 (F) – Would have established a Chief Resilience Officer within MEMA. Develop a State Resiliency Strategy.
  - HB1183 (F) – Would have codified EO 01.01.2019.07, Maryland Cyber Defense Initiative. Each agency and unit of Executive State branch government to report to the Governor on the IT systems it uses, data it stores, and other similar data points
    - *Blake Langford-* The bill codified who were the main players with the Maryland Cyber Defense Initiative: MEMA, DoIT, GOHS, MSP, and the MCAC. It established the roles of those agencies as well as created a Cyber Security Coordinating Council. If passed, it would have been codified into statute
  - SB5 (F) - Would have established the Maryland Cyber Reserve within the Military Department to prevent and resolve certain cyber-attacks.
    - *Blake Langford-* There is also a provision that allowed the Governor to requisition certain cyber equipment from the Secretary Defense. It also called for the Maryland National Guard to assist local jurisdictions in the event of a cyber disruption.
  - HB1618/SB1036 (F) - Would have established the Cybersecurity Coordination and Operations Office within MEMA. The bill would have expanded the definition of "emergency" as it relates to provisions governing MEMA to include a cybersecurity attack.
    - *Blake Langford-* The previous bill was included due to the request from the last meeting on reviewing proposed legislation that will affect cyber in the upcoming session. As explained previously, we are unable to see legislation for 2021, therefore we reviewed the legislation on cyber proposed in 2020.
    - *Executive Director, MEMA Russell Strickland-* As far as it goes for the establishment of the Cyber Security Coordination and Operation Office, similar to what the OCCC was with MEMA, he explains not having a problem reintroducing that particular bill. Again, it speaks to multiagency coordination and he believes that is what MEMA does best.
  - HB187/SB329 (P) – (Olivia's Law), Requires each public institution of higher education to submit a specified outbreak response plan to the Maryland Department of Health by August 1st each year beginning in 2021.

- *Chas Eby*- Olivia's Law was a response to the adenovirus outbreak at the University of Maryland College Park campus. There were thoughts of having a quicker response if there were requirements for planning. The planning would be centered around steps for identifying infectious disease outbreak on a college campus. From his understanding, this law was largely a response to a terrible circumstance of a College Park student death from adenovirus two years ago.
  - HB1413/SB753 (P) – Includes the City of Laurel in MIEMAC
    - *Blake Langford*- This bill includes the City of Laurel as a participating entity within the MIEMAC. As Chas Eby explained, the bill also eliminates the burden of local jurisdiction declaring a local state of emergency in order to participate within MIEMAC.
  - Misc. 911 Emergency Services bills, COVID19 bills, and environmental bills
    - *Blake Langford*- For brevity, this category contained three to four other bills regarding NG911, COVID-19 bills regarding financial items, and environmental bills. One of the environmental bills called for the Maryland Department of Environment to have expanded authority for water infrastructure emergencies.
- Blake Lanford- Overall this was a good snapshot of the legislation proposed in 2020. He explained the process of researching legislation through the Maryland General Assembly website for more information.

Past and Current GEMAC Actions led by NCR Program Manager Blake Langford. The following are the current and past actions from the GEMAC over the last 10 years.

- State-Managed Disaster Assistance Fund Memo, 2020
  - The memo was sent this year which is having an impact within the Governor's office.
- Meeting the Challenge, 2016 (complementary: see also James Lee Witt Report, 2008)
  - Both address the potential of restructuring the Homeland Security Emergency Management apparatus within Maryland State Government.
- Effective Use of the Incident Command System in a Catastrophic Public Health Emergency, 2010
  - Most items within the report were legacy concepts on ICS, however some content was still relevant for today on utilizing our unified area command. In 2009 and 2010, the GEMAC recommended the best way to manage a catastrophic public health emergency is through a unified area command. There were several other recommendations, however this one is relevant given the times we are in now.
- Issues & Recommendations Relating to Maryland's Preparedness for and Response to the H1N1 Influenza Outbreak, 2009
- *Blake Langford*- Over the past decade, the GEMAC has provided many fruitful suggestions to many Executive branch offices on topics that had a valuable impact on moving effort forwards

Chairman Ronald Gill welcomed new member Marverly Nettles to the Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council.

- Marverly Nettles currently serves as an Exercise Planner for Booz Allen Hamilton and she is also an Emergency Manager. She has a background working within a command center of a federal law



enforcement agency, which was her first exposure to Emergency Management. She is also a participant in her local community emergency response team.

Executive Director, UMB Office of Emergency Management, Johnathan Bratt led the discussion for the Proposal for GEMAC Legislative Affairs Subcommittee.

- The proposal given to the GEMAC is as follows:
  - Establish a GEMAC Legislative Affairs Subcommittee that may meet as necessary for the purposes of:
    - Evaluate emergency management related legislation
    - Provide recommendations to the GEMAC on whether to support, oppose, or offer amendments to bills
    - Enable the full GEMAC to provide those recommendations to the Governor's office for consideration in a timely manner.
- The discussion around the proposed GEMAC subcommittee is summarized below:
  - In past conversations regarding this topic, NCR Program Manager Blake Langford did not support another subcommittee because he did not have the bandwidth to provide structure and administrative support. However, at this time, he can support this subcommittee in addition to his other duties. He supports the proposed committee and believes it will be an excellent addition.
  - There was concern on the function of this subcommittee within the Hogan administration and their legislation process
    - *Director Russell Strickland* explained the charge of the GEMAC and therefore the creation of a subcommittee would be a reasonable and good idea. He agrees with John Bratt's proposal and believes it fits within the conception of what the GEMAC should be doing. He explained further the legislative session schedule and the timeline for presentations which generally begin 01 Dec. Although the GEMAC is behind for this session, he encouraged the council to continue reviewing legislation as it is proposed and share those thoughts with the Governor's office. Establishing a subcommittee could help push that goal forward as we go into the next session.
    - To ensure support of the subcommittee, Blake Langford agreed to work with Russell Strickland, Chas Eby, Pete Landon, and Mark Hubbard on identifying timeline, schedules, and overall process of how the Governor's office works with proposed bills.
  - *Pete Landon* - The GEMAC is one of the few advisory committees the Governor has, and it is a smart and valid approach to give advice on legislative affairs. Proposing a subcommittee is a smart idea as Blake Langford has been completing the work on his own with our advice and or consent.
  - *Anna Sierra, Director Caroline County Department of Emergency Services*- The creation of the GEMAC subcommittee would be a nice complement to the MACO EM affiliate group. The subcommittee makes recommendations to the larger MACO EM affiliate and they determine whether to support a given bill. If there is a bill GEMAC agrees upon, having both the GEMAC

and MACO affiliate recommendation within the legislature could make a powerful tool in our toolbox.

- After the discussion, there was a motion for Johnathan Bratt to become the Chairman of the GEMAC Legislative Affairs Subcommittee. The motion was granted, and next steps and information was given to members who are looking to join this initiative.

Executive Assistant to MEMA's Executive Director, Alexandria Hopkins, provided a quick brief on the Annual GEMAC Report for 2020.

- The annual report is due to the Governor's office by 01 Dec
- The report comprises the following: GEMAC purpose and scope, List of GEMAC members and chairman, Summary of each GEMAC meeting that is held during the year, GEMAC prospective outlook and meetings for the following year.
- GEMAC Staff Support Blake Langford and Alexandria Hopkins plan to have the final report to Pete Landon for submission by 30 Nov.

GEMAC members participated in a brief roundtable discussion to provide any additional comments and or information for the benefit of the council. The summary of the discussion is as follows:

- *Joe LaFleur, Manager GP Strategies Corporation*- Can MEMA provide an update on the operational status of the Governor's COVID activities?
  - *Chas Eby*- MEMA and all state agencies are focused on the response to COVID. MEMA enacted a Multiagency Coordination (MAC) command structure in which Executive Director Strickland and MEMA are one component of the MAC command as well as MDH, Pete Landon, and a few others. MEMA is running the MAC as well as holding responsibilities as the Planning Section Chief and Operations Section Chief positions. There are several groups under each of those sections that make up other state agencies especially from MDH and their various task forces. There is also a situational awareness section which MDH holds as the Section Chief. For the Logistics Section, MDOT holds the position of Section Chief and Department of Budget and Management is the Section Chief for Finance and Administration. In addition, there is a Joint Information Center.
  - The focus areas within the Operations Section are the Mass Vaccination Program. Maryland submitted our mass vaccination plan 3 weeks ago and that plan is publicly available. Subsequently, MEMA has conducted a few exercises and planning efforts with MDH to ensure we can receive and coordinate mass vaccination across the state. This program is also in partnership with local health departments and pharmacy partners who direct ship from the federal government.
  - Medical Surge/Hospital Systems- There is an epidemiology and lab team and contact tracing group that are working to support statewide testing efforts through contact tracing efforts. We had extremely high testing numbers over the last couple of weeks. The actual numbers of cases have been the highest levels of the pandemic. The positivity rate has increased over the last few weeks as well.

- There were several questions regarding the mass vaccination plan, dosage, capacity, and distribution. The following is a summary of the report from MEMA Deputy Executive Director Chas Eby, UMB Office of Emergency Management Executive Director Johnathan Bratt, Director of Technical Services, Communications Electronics, Jonathan Favorite, and GP Strategies Corporation Manager, Joseph LaFleur.
  - The state performed an exercise to prepare for the initial push from the federal government for distribution to the local jurisdictions.
  - The state is aware of some local jurisdictions that have performed some internal efforts as well.
  - Regarding distribution planning, there is a technical advisory group that will be partnering with MDH on developing a prioritization schema and a system for determining the exact amounts for each local jurisdiction. Population as well as special population groups will likely be two of the considerations. The state does not have exact amounts from the federal government in terms of initial shipments. There are several candidate vaccines that have submitted their information. We are likely looking for initial shipments around mid-December 2020.
  - Although the state may be receiving vaccines, one must consider the time for building capacity for distribution. The first line in all documentation that is available from National Academy of Science, MDH, and UMB internal documentation, is prioritizing front line health care providers who are the most at risk. In addition, at least the Moderna and Pfizer are two dose vaccines which will take time to build immunity. We also need to consider the amount the state will receive from the federal government, as well as compliance.
  - AstraZeneca is also a two-dose vaccine. There is an expectation for a 200 million dosage; however, half will be directed to the UK due to partnership with Oxford.
  - Regarding the testing capacity for flu season and COVID, the MDH lab administration has indicated massive amounts of testing likely due to the holiday season. They also are expecting massive amounts of testing during the height of flu season. MDH lab has built capacity to handle expanded testing for both COVID and the flu. MDH also developed a new flu surveillance dashboard that is new for this year that will publicly show where we stand with flu cases and surge if occurs. This will be a useful tool as flu season will be concurrent with COVID cases.
  - In short, the dispensing mechanism is a mixed model. There is an agreement with CVS and Walgreens for example, that will likely target long term care facilities. There are health care systems that will take care of priority staff and potentially patients. Local health departments are another identified group and later other groups may be identified. All will be registered through MDH's system and processes.

MEMA NCR Program Manager, Blake Langford led the GEMAC through the next steps to arrive at a common understanding of future intent and tasks of the group.

- Continue monitoring the recent submitted memo
- Schedule a call for agenda items for the next meeting
- Blake Langford will send legislative language that was discussed to the council
- Blake Langford will work with Johnathan Bratt on GEMAC subcommittee operations. If volunteers will like to join, they can email Johnathan Bratt, Blake Langford, or Alexandria Hopkins

- The GEMAC report will be submitted to Pete Landon by 30 Nov.
- Blake Langford or Alexandria Hopkins will send out information to GEMAC members regarding the new subcommittee members.

The Council adjourned at 1412 hours.

## **V. Prospective Outlook for 2021**

### **A. Overview**

In 2021, the GEMAC intends to mature its Legislative Affairs Subcommittee. The GEMAC will continue to expand and follow up on its current work in cyber preparedness and security as well as alternative state-managed disaster assistance funding mechanisms. Additionally, the GEMAC will continue to explore topics identified in the “What Keeps You Up At Night” analysis conducted in 2019. Finally, the GEMAC will strive to submit, in addition to its annual report, at least two (2) separate recommendations to the Governor’s Office on topics relevant to the current implementation of emergency management within Maryland State government.

### **B. Upcoming Meetings**

The GEMAC meets on a quarterly basis, with additional meetings scheduled as needed. Anticipated quarterly meeting dates for 2021 are as follows:

- February 2021
- May 2021
- August 2021
- November 2021

## **VI. Conclusion**

The GEMAC hereby submits this report along with its wishes of sincere appreciation from the individual members of the Council for the opportunity to serve the citizens of Maryland.

Respectfully submitted this 1st day of December 2020:

Ronald Gill, Chairman

Governor's Emergency Management Advisory Council