

An Affiliate of
the Maryland Association
of Counties, Inc.



Reply to:

DATE: February 24, 2021
TO: Members, Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Maryland Association of County Health Officers
Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors
RE: HB 1069 - Water Supply – Private Well Safety Program

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (the Conference) and the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO) **OPPOSE** HB 1069. The Conference and MACHO are affiliates of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) and represent county environmental health directors and county Health Officers who lead the state's 24 local public health departments.

While the Conference and MACHO are in favor of private well safety and their enhanced surveillance to protect public health, HB 1069 as introduced, would lead to costly expenditures for local health departments without any guarantee of improved outcomes. This bill fast tracks, with many required details, a new private well safety and surveillance program for the entire state with statutory requirements that may trigger unreasonable burdens in both compliance and enforcement. Currently, there is an estimated 350,000 private wells in the State, if sampling, chemical analysis, surveillance was to occur, it is unclear how local jurisdictions could fund those actions. For example, if an average cost of \$75 per sample is employed, the associated costs could be greater than \$26 million dollars. If the proposed funding is based solely on private well property transfer taxes, it does not appear that sufficient funds would be available to provide for testing, sampling, surveillance, and remediation. **The Conference and MACHO in collaboration with MACo are willing to engage the bill's sponsor to find a reasonable approach that could limit the burden on local health departments while providing an increased effort to promote public health for all Marylanders.**

If all stakeholders, such well drillers, realtors, designers, engineers, community development, local and state jurisdictions, are agreeable, the Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors will participate in a summer workgroup to develop a clear and workable plan toward achieving the bill sponsor's goals.

Accordingly, the Conference and MACHO requests the Committee give HB 1069 an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter. If you have further questions concerning this written testimony, please contact:

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