



House Bill 25

Environment – Reservoir Augmentation Permit – Establishment

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: January 29, 2025

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 25. This bill authorizes the Maryland Department of the Environment to create and administer a Reservoir Augmentation Permit for water treatment infrastructure.

As climate change becomes an enduring reality, one of the growing challenges for policymakers is how to establish patterns of smarter and less destructive resource use. One of the most critical resource use patterns to reform is water. Today, water infrastructure primarily operates in a linear fashion, where water is pumped in from a source, cleaned at a water treatment plant, and distributed into the community, after which it enters the wastewater treatment system, and is finally discharged after treatment. This linear process effectively builds in a level of waste as potable water or water which can be easily cleaned into potable water, is discharged instead of being recycled.

In Maryland and other jurisdictions, wastewater treatment technology already restores water back to a safe drinkable quality, meaning that final discharge meets the health and safety requirements to be re-entered into the system. HB 25 is innovative because – instead of relying on a more wasteful linear system – it gives counties a tool to develop more circular systems, reducing both waste and demand for increasingly limited supplies of fresh and usable water.

Counties support HB 25 as it creates another tool in the toolbox to serve our mutual constituents in smarter and more sustainable ways. For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give HB 25 a **FAVORABLE** report.