



Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, Inc.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

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MEMBER AGENCIES

February 2, 2026

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Worcester County
WSSC Water

The Honorable Marc Korman
Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: **OPPOSE -- HB 204 (Drinking Water – Regulation – Control and Prevention of Waterborne Disease)**

Dear Chair Korman:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (MAMWA), I am writing to **OPPOSE HB 204**, which would require that a public water system (PWS) maintain a certain level of residual disinfectant, sample for residual concentrations at “frequent and regular intervals” to determine levels at “different points in the public water system,” and provide written notice to customers of any disruption (very broadly defined, to include, for example, water plant maintenance) in the distribution system if it could result in increased legionella bacteria levels. Failure to comply would subject a PWS to civil penalties.

MAMWA is a statewide association of local governments and wastewater treatment agencies that serve approximately 95% of the State's sewer population. Many of MAMWA's members also operate a PWS. MAMWA urges the Committee to vote **NO** on HB 204 for the following reasons:

- **HB 204 Implementation Costs Would Be Very High**

MAMWA Members who own and operate a PWS provided cost estimates to implement the proposed legislation:

- **Member #1:** Estimates \$40 M in capital for an interim retrofit of filters with granular activated carbon while planning permanent improvements; \$5 M in capital to pilot test new equipment; \$600,000 to \$1.4 B in capital for permanent treatment improvements (this includes cost estimates for PFAS and disinfection byproduct (DBP) precursor treatment to address simultaneous compliance with other Safe Drinking Water Act regulations).

GENERAL COUNSEL

AquaLaw PLC

- **Member #2:** Costs for all seven systems could range from \$10,000 to \$200,000 to implement the residual mandate. In addition, the utility would be required to scale up notification procedures, train staff, submit substantial records, and address a higher volume of inquiries from the Maryland Department of the Environment.
- **Member #3:** Estimates total expenditures for FY27 at \$335,776; for FY28 at \$242,839; for FY29 at \$250,124; for FY30 at \$257,628; and for FY31 at \$265,357.
- **Member #4:** Costs for compliance could reach \$100,000 per year.
- **Member #5:** The Member is working to assess financial impacts but anticipates substantial capital and operational investments to meet the proposed minimum residuals level creating an undue hardship for the system.

As noted below, MAMWA questions whether the financial burden borne by our drinking water customers and your constituents would provide any public health benefit.

- **Increased Risks from Disinfection Byproducts**

Chlorine reacts with naturally present organic materials during water treatment to form DBPs, including trihalomethanes and haloacetic acids. Both are hazardous chemicals regulated under the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Safe Drinking Water Act. If PWS are required to increase residual chlorine levels to the prescribed minimum in the legislation, there will also be a rise in DBP formation.

- **No Measurable Impacts on Public Health**

Protecting public health is the primary objective of operating a PWS. That said, legionnaire's disease typically occurs when chlorine residuals are lost in privately owned buildings, like hospitals, long-term care facilities, and hotels, with poor building management or poor plumbing design. To improve public health impacts, we should be prioritizing best management practices for those facilities, including building management, building and energy efficiency codes, and plumbing infrastructure upgrades. A PWS has very limited jurisdiction beyond the meter—individual, privately-owned plumbing systems are not within our purview.

MAMWA urges the Committee to **Vote NO** on HB 204.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at Lisa@AquaLaw.com or 804-716-9021.

Sincerely,



Lisa M. Ochsenhirt
MAMWA Deputy General Counsel

cc: Environment and Transportation Committee Members, HB 204 Sponsor