



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

DATE: February 3, 2026

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

BILL: SB 189

The Maryland Municipal League (MML) supports Senate Bill 189 (Mason’s Law), with amendment. SB189 requires municipalities to install or construct approved grating systems on all new and existing open drainage inlets. This bill is a meaningful and necessary step toward protecting public safety within our communities. The legislation is prompted by the tragic loss of Mason, a child whose memory serves as a poignant reminder of the critical need for these life-saving measures. We wish to sincerely express our deepest sympathy and condolences to Mason’s family and loved ones. By moving forward with this bill, Maryland demonstrates a commitment to preventing similar tragedies and honoring Mason's legacy through action.

While the League wholeheartedly supports the intent of SB189, we respectfully request consideration of two key amendments to strengthen the bill and expand its effectiveness. First, we seek a clear expansion of available funding sources. As introduced, SB189 does not designate or identify funding mechanisms to assist municipalities with the costs associated with retrofitting or installing new grates. Municipalities, particularly smaller or resource-constrained jurisdictions, may face challenges in meeting the bill’s requirements without fiscal support. For this reason, we respectfully request an amendment that authorizes or facilitates additional funding sources—such as state grants, cost-sharing initiatives, or infrastructure safety funds, to ensure equitable implementation across Maryland.

Second, we believe it is vital to clarify and expand the scope of SB189 to include open drainage inlets located on private property. Notably, the heartbreaking incident that inspired this legislation occurred on private property, underscoring the imperative for comprehensive safeguards. As currently written, the bill applies to “any new or existing open drainage inlet within the municipality,” which could be interpreted as limited to public property. To ensure that the safety measures envisioned by this bill protect all Marylanders, regardless of whether an inlet is publicly or privately maintained, we respectfully request an amendment to explicitly include open drainage inlets on private property within the bill’s scope.

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.

Public safety is a fundamental responsibility of local government. With these amendments, SB189 would provide comprehensive, enforceable protections around all open drainage inlets, and would supply municipalities with the financial tools needed for effective and equitable implementation.

For these reasons, the League respectfully requests that the committee adopt amendments to expand funding options and clarify the bill's applicability to private property, and with these changes, provide Senate Bill 189 (Mason's Law) with a favorable report.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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