

HOUSE BILL 1531

L2

EMERGENCY BILL

4lr3371

By: **St. Mary's County Delegation**

Introduced and read first time: March 3, 2014

Assigned to: Rules and Executive Nominations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **St. Mary's County Metropolitan Commission – Water and Sewer Service**
3 **Charges – Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squads – Exemption**

4 FOR the purpose of exempting certain property owned or leased by certain volunteer
5 fire departments and volunteer rescue squads from the imposition of certain
6 water or sewer service charges by the St. Mary's County Metropolitan
7 Commission; making this Act an emergency measure; and generally relating to
8 water and sewer service charges imposed by the St. Mary's County Metropolitan
9 Commission.

10 BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
11 The Public Local Laws of St. Mary's County
12 Section 113–14
13 Article 19 – Public Local Laws of Maryland
14 (2007 Edition and February 2013 Supplement, as amended)

15 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF
16 MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

17 **Article 19 – St. Mary's County**

18 113–14.

19 A. For the purpose of providing funds for maintaining, repairing and
20 operating its water supply and sewerage systems, for line extensions of them, for its
21 administrative and other expenses, including proper depreciation allowances, if any,
22 and for interest on and the retirement of bonds as specified in this chapter, the
23 Commission may make service rates, as it deems necessary, on water lines and sewers
24 chargeable against all properties having a connection with any water pipe or sewer
25 pipe under its supervision or ownership. The service rates may include any State or
26 Federally mandated fees or charges. The rate for both water and sewer service shall be

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



1 uniform throughout a sanitary district, subject to changes that the Commission
2 considers necessary. Beginning on July 1, 1993, the rate for both water and sewer
3 service shall be uniform throughout all sanitary districts, subject to changes that the
4 Commission considers necessary. However, where the Commission provides service to
5 property in an area in which it is economically not feasible to provide service at the
6 uniform rate because of the distance of the area from the principal facilities of the
7 Commission, the Commission may classify the property as a remote area and may
8 impose an additional service charge to meet the additional cost of providing service to
9 the property. The Commission may collect a reasonable deposit in advance of
10 furnishing water or sewerage service. The Commission shall begin the assessment of
11 water and sewer service rates either at the time of the connection of all spigots or
12 hydrants, toilets, and waste drains to a water main or sewer or on the expiration of the
13 deadline for connection as required by the Commission in accordance with section
14 113-10 of this Article, whichever occurs first.

15 B. The sewer service rates shall be reasonable and shall be charged to all
16 properties being served in a given sanitary district.

17 C. The water service charge shall consist of a minimum or ready-to-serve
18 charge, which shall be based upon the size of the meter on the water connection
19 leading to the property, and of a charge for water used, which shall be based upon the
20 amount of water passing through the meter in excess of any water included in the
21 minimum or ready-to-serve charge during the period between the last two (2)
22 readings. The meter shall be placed on water connections as determined by the
23 Commission. If the Commission at any time determines not to have meters installed in
24 all the properties in a given sanitary district that are connected to the system, then a
25 reasonable flat rate, as determined by the Commission, shall be charged to all
26 properties in which meters have not been installed. This rate shall be uniform within a
27 sanitary district.

28 **D. NOTWITHSTANDING SUBSECTIONS B AND C OF THIS SECTION, ANY**
29 **PROPERTY OWNED OR LEASED BY EITHER A REGULARLY ORGANIZED**
30 **VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT OR A VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD IS EXEMPT**
31 **FROM THE IMPOSITION OF A WATER OR SEWER SERVICE CHARGE WHILE USED**
32 **FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES.**

33 [D.] E. Bills for the amount of the charges shall be sent monthly, quarterly
34 or semiannually, as the Commission determines, to the owner of each property served
35 and are then payable at the Office of the Commission. If any bill remains unpaid after
36 thirty (30) days from the due date or dates specified in it, the bill is overdue and the
37 Commission may begin collection proceedings. At the request of the owner, bills for
38 services may be sent, at the discretion of the Commission, to persons or entities other
39 than the owner, provided that the owner states in his request that any bill so mailed
40 will be considered as notice to him as if it were mailed to the owner in accordance with
41 above.

1 **[E.] F.** When a bill is overdue and after written notice is left upon the
2 premises or mailed to the last known address of the owner, the Commission shall turn
3 off the water or sewer, if possible, from the property in question. The water or sewer
4 service may not be resumed until the bill or bills, and a charge as determined by the
5 Commission to cover costs incurred to turn off and to turn on the water or sewer
6 service, have been paid.

7 **[F.] G.** If any charges remain unpaid for a period of thirty (30) days after
8 the due date for payment, a late charge at a rate not to exceed one and five-tenths (1
9 5/10) percent per month may be made by the Commission until all delinquent charges
10 are paid, the late charge to be in addition to all other charges.

11 **[G.] H.** If any bill shall remain unpaid for thirty (30) days after the due
12 date, it shall be collectible from the owner of the property served in the same manner
13 as other debts are collectible in the County. The service charges and all penalties and
14 late charges shall be a first lien against the property, and the same procedures as set
15 forth in section 113-12.D. of this chapter, shall be followed by the Commission in
16 collecting those debts.

17 **SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED,** That this Act is an emergency
18 measure, is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public health or safety,
19 has been passed by a yea and nay vote supported by three-fifths of all the members
20 elected to each of the two Houses of the General Assembly, and shall take effect from
21 the date it is enacted.