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By: Senator McCray (By Request - Baltimore City Administration)

Introduced and read first time: February 15, 2024

Assigned to: Rules

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning 2 Baltimore Regional Water Authority Governance Workgroup - Established 3 FOR the purpose of establishing the Baltimore Regional Water Authority Governance Workgroup to study the regional water authority governance approach in the 4 5 Baltimore region; and generally relating to the Baltimore Regional Water Authority 6 Governance Workgroup. SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, 7 8 That: 9 There is a Baltimore Regional Water Authority Governance Workgroup. (a) 10 (b) (1) The Workgroup consists of the following members: one member of the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the 11 12 President of the Senate: 13 (ii) one member of the House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker 14 of the House: 15 two members appointed by the Governor; (iii) 16 five members appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City; (iv) 17 (v) three members appointed by the County Executive of Baltimore 18 County; and 19 (vi) one member from either Anne Arundel County, Carroll County, 20 Howard County, or Harford County, appointed by the Chair of the Baltimore Metropolitan 21 Council.



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SENATE BILL 1174

1	(2)	Each	memb	er shall:	
2		(i)	have	knowledge of:	
3			1.	water resources management and protection;	
4 5	systems or comp	arable e	2. expertis	the management and operation of water or wastewater se;	
6			3.	environmental finance;	
7			4.	human resources management; or	
8			5.	environmental justice and equity; or	
9		(ii)	repre	sent ratepayers in their respective jurisdictions.	
10 11	(c) The Mayor of Baltimore City and the County Executive of Baltimore County shall jointly designate a chair of the Workgroup.				
12 13	(d) The shall jointly prov	-		timore City and the County Executive of Baltimore County e Workgroup.	
14	(e) An	nember	of the V	Vorkgroup:	
15	(1)	may	not rec	eive compensation as a member of the Workgroup; but	
16 17	(2) Travel Regulation			to reimbursement for expenses under the Standard State lin the State budget.	
18	(f) (1)	The	Workgr	roup shall strive for consensus among its members.	
19	(2)	An a	ffirmat	ive vote of 10 members is needed for the Workgroup to act.	
20	(g) The	e Workg	roup sh	nall:	
21 22 23	(1) Force submitted 2023;			report of the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task with Chapter 179 of the Acts of the General Assembly of	
24 25	(2) governance mod			issues relevant to implementing a regional water authority nore region, including:	
26 27	a regional water	(i) authori	1. ty affe	developing an equity analysis to analyze how the shift to	

$\frac{1}{2}$	residents during th	ne imp	2. recommending programs to assist potentially affected lementation;			
3 4 5	(ii) developing a financial transition plan to analyze how implementing a regional water authority affects the finances of each jurisdiction within the governance area, including pension and benefit commitments and debt service;					
6 7 8	(iii) assessing the available workforce for a regional water authority, including hiring new employees and transitioning existing employees from Baltimore City and applicable counties to the regional water authority;					
9 10 11			reviewing any legal and legislative actions required for all water authority governance model, including analyzing changes city and county codes and charters; and			
12 13 14		_	assessing the administrative and operational changes required nal water authority, including whether stormwater management view of the regional water authority;			
15	(3)	analy	ze whether creating a City–County Rate Board is necessary to:			
16		(i)	ensure fairness for consumers; and			
17		(ii)	balance city and county rates; and			
18 19 20 21 22	(4) review the regional governance models recommended in the report of the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force submitted in accordance with Chapter 179 of the Acts of the General Assembly of 2023 and other existing and potential regional water and wastewater governance models to assess how different regional approaches may improve:					
23		(i)	management;			
24		(ii)	operations;			
25		(iii)	employee recruitment;			
26		(iv)	retention and training;			
27		(v)	billing and collections;			
28		(vi)	planning for capital improvements;			
29		(vii)	emergency management; and			
30		(viii)	rate stability for customers.			

(h)

(1)

of no further force and effect.

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SENATE BILL 1174

The Workgroup shall hire independent consultants to facilitate the

2 requirements of subsection (g) of this section, including: 3 outside counsel to assist with the analysis of issues related to 4 regional governance; and 5 (ii) experts in equity analysis. 6 For fiscal year 2026, the Governor shall include in the annual budget (2)7 bill an appropriation of \$500,000 for the purpose of hiring independent consultants under paragraph (1) of this subsection. 8 9 On or before June 30, 2027, the Workgroup shall report its findings to the Mayor of Baltimore City, the County Executive of Baltimore County, the Governor, and, in 10 accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly. 11 12 (j) In developing the report required under subsection (i) of this section, the 13 Workgroup shall consult with the Office of the Attorney General. 14 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2024. It shall remain effective for a period of 3 years and, at the end of June 30, 2027,

this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and