



SB546 SCHOOL BUILDINGS - DRINKING WATER OUTLETS - ELEVATED LEVEL OF LEAD (SAFE SCHOOL DRINKING WATER ACT

February 24, 2021

EDUCATION, HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

OPPOSE

Jeanette Ortiz, Esq., Legislative & Policy Counsel (410.703.5352)

Anne Arundel County Public Schools (AACPS) opposes **SB546 School Buildings - Drinking Water Outlets - Elevated Level of Lead (Safe School Drinking Water Act**. This bill 1) redefines “elevated level of lead” to mean a lead concentration in drinking water that exceeds five parts per billion (ppb) for the purposes of required lead water testing and remedial measures in public and nonpublic schools; and 2) makes conforming changes to existing notice and remediation requirements. If a water test sample for a drinking water outlet was analyzed on or before June 1, 2021, and the analysis indicated a concentration of lead that was more than 5 ppb but less than 20 ppb, a school must take appropriate remedial measures by August 1, 2022.

The AACPS Division of Facilities is responsible for the construction, maintenance, and operation of all public school facilities in a safe and efficient manner in support of the educational goals of AACPS. AACPS operates public school facilities in a manner conducive to the educational process by ensuring the health, safety, comfort, and welfare of the occupants. Local school systems devote substantial staff time and resources to provide healthy school environments, which include the water quality and addressing any issues associated with water quality.

The law was just amended in 2017 to include additional requirements to the State’s already well-established and robust drinking water outlet testing regiment that comports with federal law and a reasonable 36 month per outlet testing frequency cycle. The current federal standard is 20 parts per billion. Significantly decreasing the threshold level down by 75% below federal standards would unnecessarily create a tremendous workload issue for AACPS staff. This bill would also result in a significant unfunded mandate that could easily triple our current operating and capital remediation costs. This unfunded mandate would necessitate the diversion of funds and resources out of the schoolhouse to fulfill these new requirements without evidence that it is solving a documented need. In addition, AACPS would likely be required to contract with another vendor to fulfill the requirements in this bill.

Accordingly, AACPS respectfully requests an **UNFAVORABLE** committee report on SB546.