



**TESTIMONY OFFERED ON BEHALF OF
THE OCEAN CITY HOTEL-MOTEL-RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION**

**IN OPPOSITION OF SB254 Public Safety –Swimming Pool and Spa Standards – Adoption
Before the Judicial Proceedings Committee
February 3, 2021**

On behalf of Ocean City hospitality industry, we respectfully request the rejection of SB254. Rather than initiating an entirely new set of standards to be overseen by a different state agency, we believe in the collaboration already shown as achievable through the Pool Standards Workgroups. Since January 2019, when the Bureau of Environmental Health posted revisions to the Health Code updating the Pool Regulations to strengthen the current industry conditions, the Pool Standards Workgroup has continued to meet. This workgroup is based on the expertise of pool and spa operators, builders, engineers, and local health department inspectors, as well as documents from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Model Aquatic Health Code (MAHC).

The proposed International Pool Code is not as comprehensive as the Maryland Pool Regulations and rather than adoption, we suggest a detailed study comparing the International Code with the Maryland Pool Regulations. This could be done in a section-by-section detailed manner to determine which would better strengthen the safety of Maryland pools and spas.

It appears as if this bill would change the oversight of pool and spa regulations either by adding the Maryland Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation (“DLLR”) to the process or moving oversight of the process from the Bureau of Environmental Health to DLLR. Currently, the Bureau works closely with pool stakeholders to issue permits, collect fees, and complete safety inspections. There does not appear to be any reason to add to or alter the Bureau’s oversight and undoubtedly this change would result in an increase in fees to cover administrative costs.

The timeline concerns us as requiring any swimming pool or spa to meet the International Code standards within such a short time would result in significant expenditures. Ultimately these costs may require the closing of some pools, leading to reduced access to aquatic venues. Given the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our pool operators’ budgets, this does not seem to be an appropriate time to take measures that increase expenses. This bill appears to offer a solution when there is no problem and therefore, the OCHMRA respectfully requests your opposition to SB254. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Susan L. Jones
Executive Director