

January 31, 2022

FAVORABLE WITH BILL – HB 0250: Environment and Transportation - Private Well Safety Act of 2022

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

We are writing in strong support of House Bill 0250 on behalf of Waterkeepers Chesapeake, a coalition of seventeen Waterkeepers, Riverkeepers, and Coastkeepers working to make the waters of the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays swimmable and fishable. As we here at Waterkeepers work to protect and maintain the ability of the public to safely enjoy the waters of our State, we are in support of ensuring the ability for all Marylanders to have access to safe drinking water, regardless of the source. The **Maryland Private Well Safety Program** aims to create a well testing and remediation program under which Marylanders can receive financial assistance with the costs associated with testing kits and, when unsafe levels of contamination are found, the costs of well remediation as well. The establishment of the program will help ameliorate the lack of protection provided to private drinking wells and smaller community-based drinking water systems under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act. This lack of protection has unfortunately led to Maryland well owners to take matters into their own hands, leading to many either being unaware of testing procedures or being unable to afford it.

Waterkeepers Chesapeake supports House Bill 0250 and its expressed goals. According to a 2020 report from the Center for Progressive Reform reviewing protective policies and programs that states have adopted to protect the drinking water of private well owners, Maryland ranks among the five states with the fewest protections nationwide. We strongly believe that establishing a standard as HB 0250 would provide helps further the goal of providing all Marylanders with safe access to drinking water. Therefore, we believe these requirements would properly be carried out under the **Maryland Private Well Safety Program** in order to establish practices to require Maryland to **provide protections and resources that other states provide well owners**.

For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on HB0250.

Alexander Villazon
Waterkeepers Chesapeake