



## Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, Inc.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

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February 17, 2022

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The Honorable Kumar Barve, Chair  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251, House Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

**Re: HB 653 (Conservation Finance Act)**

Dear Chairman Barve:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (MAMWA), I am writing to express concerns with HB 653, which would authorize the use of the State Water Quality Revolving Loan Fund (WQRLF) for green or blue infrastructure projects. MAMWA requests that the Committee consider amendments that would give traditional infrastructure a funding priority over these newer types of projects.

MAMWA is a statewide association of local governments and wastewater treatment agencies that serve approximately 95% of the State's sewered population. MAMWA members own and operate wastewater treatment plants that are capital-intensive and need regular maintenance and upgrades to comply with strict environmental requirements, to serve local customers, and to protect the environment. MAMWA members rely on the WQRLF for plant improvements and collection system replacements. Using a portion of the WQRLF for blue and green infrastructure would make less money available for these critical public assets. This would, in turn, put more pressure on local ratepayers and negatively impact the ability of localities to control rate increases. HB 653 also comes at a time when the buying power of local utility revenues has been dramatically reduced by the pandemic and related impacts on the supply chain. Local utilities are struggling to purchase the chemicals needed to run plants and to hire the labor for operations and construction projects. MAMWA respectfully requests that the Committee consider the ongoing needs of the State's wastewater plants when acting on HB 653.

### CONSULTANT MEMBERS

Black & Veatch  
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### GENERAL COUNSEL

AquaLaw PLC

Please feel free to contact me at [lisa@aqualaw.com](mailto:lisa@aqualaw.com) or 804-716-9021 with any questions.

Sincerely,

Lisa Ochsenhirt  
Deputy General Counsel

cc: House Environment and Transportation Committee Members  
HB 653 Sponsors