



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

Senate Bill 880
Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force

Position: Support

Committee: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Date: March 15, 2023

From: Gabrielle Leach

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 880. The bill would establish a Task force to identify and recommend water supply and wastewater collection governance structures best suited for the Baltimore region.

Senate Bill 880 would establish a Task force to study water supply and wastewater governance in Baltimore City and surrounding jurisdictions that are served by Baltimore City's water supply and wastewater collection systems. The Task force would consist of thirteen (13) members, appointed by certain governmental groups. Staff for the Task force would be jointly provided by the Mayor of Baltimore City and the County Executive of Baltimore County. HB 843 does not provide for MDE to be represented on the Task force, however, the bill requires the Task force to consult with MDE, and Maryland Environmental Service, in developing its recommendations and report. MDE has regulatory responsibilities over the Task force's subject areas and expects to provide subject matter expertise regarding necessary legislation and funding to establish the recommended model.

Additionally, the bill follows up to the July 2021 Water/Sewer Services Comprehensive Business Process Review that was jointly undertaken by Baltimore City and Baltimore County. The consultants on that project "provided several models of governance and operations that may provide optimal customer service, system reliability, or interjurisdictional collaboration, and specifically recommended the exploration of alternative governance structures."

MDE believes the Task force will be helpful in recommending a comprehensive and long-term solution to wastewater needs in the Baltimore metropolitan region. Accordingly, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 880.