

Municipally Owned Utilities

Testimony for Senate Bill 531

Public Water Systems - Supplier Requirements (Water Safety and Cybersecurity Act of 2023)

Position: Oppose

This bill would require a supplier of water to inspect valves in a public water system in a specified manner, repair or replace some valves, inspect fire hydrants, formulate, and implement a cybersecurity plan, identify the locations of valves, and record characteristics and identifiers of some valves.

This legislation is based on a national model drafted by private water companies with the intent to undercut public support of public water systems so that they can be privatized in the future.

The Munis water systems are heavily regulated by the Maryland Department of the Environment. Our plants are required to follow specific regulations pertaining to routine and substantial testing on the infrastructure and water quality.

The legislation prescribes a uniform way for all public water systems to operate without regard to the size of the operation. We have a small rate base, which is already expensive, and this would add unnecessary and duplicative requirements that would only increase costs to our communities.

The Munis respectively urge an unfavorable report.