



## Senate Bill 512

### *Drinking Water - Legionella Pneumophila Bacterium - Minimizing Growth and Transmission*

MACo Position: **OPPOSE**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment  
Committee

Date: February 23, 2023

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **OPPOSES** SB 512. This bill would impose an arbitrary and unrealistic mandate on county governments that operate public water systems. Ultimately, this bill ignores already established best practices and would add significant delays to planned projects, and new costs onto system users.

No local leaders want unsafe water for their communities. The specific means and dictates of SB 512 are at the heart of county concerns, not the uniting goal to deliver safe public utilities. Local governments appropriately manage most water systems and strive to provide the safest service to the general public. They have managed public water systems and have accounted for health and safety successfully – and in many cases, have been far ahead of the State’s requirements.

SB 512 would impose an arbitrary and unrealistic mandate on local governments. Under the bill, counties would be required to notify the public and test for certain water contaminants at maximum four hours after becoming aware of a disruption in a water system. This timeline places an unnecessary and unrealistic expectation on public works staff who should first prioritize resolving the disruption. Compliance with the bill’s lengthy list of requirements would surely add material costs to ratepayers everywhere.

Furthermore, this bill also imposes a minimum thirty-day notification window for any planned disruption to water service. Arbitrary hold times such as this only serve to delay projects that are critical in nature and add unnecessary extra expense.

While counties appropriately bear the burden of water infrastructure safety and welcome partnering with the State on these important goals, SB 512 prescribes an arbitrary and unrealistic approach. This legislation ignores already existing best practices for containment, notification, and testing. For these reasons, MACo **OPPOSES** SB 512 and urges an **UNFAVORABLE** report.