

Favorable with amendments for (HB843-SB880) - Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force

The five amendments seek protect ratepayers and workers as the Task Force guides future state legislation and are below:

Amendment 1. Low-Income Ratepayer and Labor Representation on the Taskforce. This amendment would require (1) the County Executive and Mayor to each appoint one labor representative, (2) the Governor's appointees to include one low-income ratepayer and one representative from a local community organization representing low-income ratepayers; and (3) all Task Force members to be either ratepayers or representatives of ratepayers.

Amendment 2. Racial and Economic Equity. This amendment would require racial equity and economic equity impact assessments of each alternative governing structures.

Amendment 3: Low-Income Ratepayer and Labor Protections. This amendment would direct the Task Force to limit their recommendation to governing models that adhere to local ratepayer and worker protections, including (1) Ballot Question E of 2018 that banned private for-profit ownership, operation or management of the systems, (2) the Water Accountability and Equity Act, which established a local water affordability program and other ratepayer protections, (3) collective bargaining rights of workers, and (4) the sewage backup reimbursement programs.

Amendment 4: Public Input. This amendment would require public input at public hearings throughout the City and County. It would require a public comment period on a draft report.

Amendment 5: Timeline. This amendment would extend the timeline from January 2024 to June 2027 to allow sufficient time for due-diligence and public input and comments.

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