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February 14, 2023

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
2 West
Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: SB 207 Drinking Water – Innovative Potable Reuse Pilot Program – Establishment

Dear Chairman Feldman and Committee Members:

The City of Westminster is writing to encourage you to support SB 407, which will offer the City of Westminster residents and businesses a new water source to address long-standing drought issues.

Attached please find the following newspaper articles that outline the drought conditions that the region and the State experienced in 1999 – 2002.

- LeDuc, Daniel, (August 8, 1999). Glendening Taking the Heat. Washington Post, page C1.
- LeDuc, Daniel, (July 30, 1999). Statewide Water Emergency Declared in Maryland. Washington Post, page A1
- Hartl, Boris, (February 21, 2002). Dry Winter Fuels Drought Concerns: Observers Say Only Rain Can Forestall More Restrictions. Carroll County Times, pages A1 and A7.
- Miller, Carrie Ann (February 21, 2002). Driller Report Failing Wells. Carroll County Times, pages A1 and A7.

These drought conditions are the very heart of why the City of Westminster needs a permanent, City-owned and maintained water source, such as water reuse. SB 407 will provide us with that opportunity.

Sincerely,

Sara Imhulse
City Administrator

Glendening Taking the Heat

By Daniel LeDuc

Washington Post Staff Writer

Sunday, August 8, 1999; Page C1

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- **Special Report:**
[The Drought of '99](#)

Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening's decision last week to impose the first mandatory water restrictions in state history has again thrust him into the national spotlight as debate sharpens over whether he needed to apply them across the whole state.

His move to ban most outside water use won wide praise from conservationists as he became the first governor this year to mandate limits statewide. He appeared on "CBS This Morning," made the front page of the New York Times, and reporters from as far as Tokyo sought him out.

But his decision angered many citizens and led to second-guessing from some local officials in Prince George's County and Northern Virginia, which joins the Washington suburbs in drawing water from the Potomac River. Water supplies are not the same throughout Maryland, and tough restrictions did not have to be imposed statewide, they said.

Glendening (D) defended his actions, saying it is important to err on the side of caution.

"I just can't imagine what I'd say to Marylanders three months from now if we had less water or water contamination," Glendening said in an interview. "If we get the rains, I'd rather face a few people who are irritated because they lost some shrubbery."

No one outside Glendening's administration urged him to take the steps he did, not the managers of the state's water systems or other elected leaders.

"It's inappropriate to be lumping the [Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission] and Montgomery and Prince George's counties in with other jurisdictions when they may have separate and distinct problems," said Maryland House Minority Whip Del. Robert L. Flanagan (R-Howard). "There's something about Parris Glendening that he likes to tell people what to do."

Glendening has acted boldly and been rewarded for it in the past. He closed part of the Potomac River just before Labor Day weekend in 1997 when the toxic microbe *Pfiesteria piscicida* killed fish and sickened people. Critics questioned the need then, but only weeks later he received national praise for his handling of an environmental crisis.

“I would rank this up with the challenge of pfiesteria because it affects so many people and the implications are long-term,” Glendening said in an interview before leaving this weekend for a meeting in St. Louis of the National Governors Association. He is expected to be elected vice chairman of the organization, putting him in line to chair the group next year.

Noting that he was in his second term and unable to seek reelection, Glendening said political considerations did not enter his calculations. Several political analysts said they saw little downside for Glendening.

“So long as it doesn’t impinge too much on lifestyles, I don’t think the public will object too much,” said Bethesda-based pollster Keith Haller. “There’s a striking similarity to what happened over pfiesteria. In that instance, the public rallied behind the governor. He was at odds with other state leaders [then] . . . and ultimately he seemed to take the smarter approach.”

Glendening won some vindication last week when the governors of Delaware and New Jersey followed his lead and imposed their own limits; much of Pennsylvania also is under strict water use prohibitions. His actions also have been supported by State Senate President Thomas V. Mike Miller Jr. (D-Prince George’s) and Maryland House Speaker Casper R. Taylor Jr. (D-Allegany).

The severity of the drought first struck Glendening during a late July meeting in Western Maryland with Gov. Cecil Underwood (R) of neighboring West Virginia. Underwood told him conditions were so dry just over the border that his state was pumping water from limestone caverns to increase supplies.

Within days, Glendening traveled to Southern Maryland and saw the parched farm fields there. At the same time, analysts at the state Department of the Environment, which routinely monitors water quality and supplies, began expressing caution about the cumulative effect of the lack of rain, low stream levels and the tapping of reservoirs. Dozens of small local water systems began reporting that they were calling for voluntary or mandatory restrictions.

The governor ordered his staff to give him a report. During the course of a July 28 briefing by the governor’s senior staff, word came that Baltimore Public Works Director George Balog told state officials the Baltimore region had just a 35-day water supply. (Balog later said that he was misunderstood and that the region really had a 60-day supply.)

That news changed the dynamic of the meeting, and Glendening ordered a drought task force created. Plans for a low-key Annapolis news conference to urge voluntary water cutbacks were scrapped in favor of a more attention-grabbing locale – Carroll County’s Liberty Reservoir, which is 24 feet below its normal level. The next day the governor announced that mandatory restrictions were all but certain – though he hoped they could be phased in.

The drought task force held two public meetings in the next several days, after which Glendening learned that conditions had worsened and that his task force was now recommending tougher restrictions than he had originally contemplated.

There was a risk in angering suburban Washington residents because the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission had more water in reserve than Baltimore, but Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan (D) had already called for voluntary restrictions July 12.

After meeting with his task force, Glendening went ahead Thursday with his water restrictions and warned they could be in place through the summer or longer depending upon the weather.

Some experts said his proactive stand made sense.

“The WSSC has plenty of reserve now,” said Kelly Enders, a spokeswoman for the American Waterworks Association, an international organization whose engineers work on water quality issues. But, “how much do we want to deplete our resources and put ourselves at risk six months or a year from now?”

Nevertheless, water commissioner Burton Rubin in Fairfax County, which also draws its water from the Potomac, said that Glendening’s actions were unnecessary and that he was perplexed why the governor was invoking them when reservoirs were still adequate. Prince George’s County Executive Wayne K. Curry (D) said he too believed the water supply was sufficient and ordered police not to fine violators.

Glendening said “a sense of fairness wishes we had uniform policy” across state borders in Virginia and the District, which have no restrictions except in Loudoun County. “But that’s up to the officials over there.” He said that if the Potomac drops farther, he intends to be “more insistent” in demanding cooperation from Virginia officials.

He said he had driven along the Potomac several days ago and was as concerned by the river’s low level as he was by the low amount of water in Baltimore’s reservoirs. Look, he said, leaning forward: “I would love for you and everyone else to write [in a few weeks] ‘Look at all the rain. The governor acted prematurely.’ But I don’t think that’s going to happen.”

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Statewide Water Emergency Declared in Maryland

By Daniel LeDuc
Washington Post Staff Writer
Friday, July 30, 1999; Page A1



Cleveland Marine fishes from the water-depleted Liberty Reservoir in Oakland, Md., on Thursday. (AP)

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[Drought Season Hits Early](#)

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ELDERSBURG, Md., July 29— Maryland Gov. Parris N. Glendening declared a statewide emergency today to deal with the effects of the worst drought in 30 years and called on residents to voluntarily conserve water as he weighs imposing the state's first mandatory restrictions.

"We will have to have some mandatory restrictions. It will impact the average Marylander," Glendening said. "We expect the drought to get worse before we see relief. . . . We're all going to have to make sacrifices."

Withering Dry Spell

This year's drought in the Washington area is the second-worst since the government started keeping records in the 1800s.

Normal rainfall for a given year	38.63 in.
Worst drought: March 1930 to February 1931	20.09 in.
This year: August 1998 to July 1999	24.13 in.

SOURCE: National Weather Service

Glendening (D) made his announcement at the edge of the Liberty Reservoir in Carroll County, where water levels are 24 feet below normal. The reservoir serves much of the Baltimore area.

Conditions are not as dire in the Washington area, primarily because much of the region draws its water from the Potomac River. Though the Potomac is running at only half its usual volume, officials at the Washington Suburban Sanitary

Commission said the river's supply of water was more than adequate to meet the needs of suburban residents through mid-November even if there is no additional rain.

Still, Glendening said that he was concerned about the low level in the Potomac and that he was asking residents statewide to shoulder the drought's burden by not watering lawns or flowers, taking shorter showers and not washing cars. He said mandatory restrictions would be decided in the coming days after a panel of state officials, headed by Department of the Environment Secretary Jane Nishida, reports to him on Tuesday.

Glendening said he would impose any mandatory restrictions on a statewide basis initially. But he has asked officials to consider

whether any subsequent restrictions should be phased in on a regional basis based on local water supplies.

Any enforcement likely would be done with the help of local police departments, but Glendening said he hoped "most people will simply do the right thing."

This year's drought in Maryland is the second-worst since the government began keeping records in the 1880s. With rainfall as much as 50 percent below normal and the residual effects from the absence of rain last winter, Maryland has been among the hardest-hit drought areas in the nation.

The drought has shriveled corn, dropped rivers to record low levels, turned lawns rocklike and brown and prompted dozens of local jurisdictions to impose voluntary and, in some cases, mandatory water-use restrictions, banning car-washing and watering of lawns and gardens. Offenders are subject to fines.

Drought conditions also have hit Virginia, where it is "as dry as it's been since the 1930s, the Dust Bowl years," according to Al Peterlin, chief meteorologist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. But he said nowhere in Virginia is faring as badly as Maryland.

Glendening's legal authority for the emergency declaration is the same used for disasters such as floods, blizzards and riots. It allowed him to seek federal aid for farmers whose crops have been devastated by the drought and to spend \$3 million on state aid, which he said would be distributed "immediately."

Carroll County's Liberty Reservoir and two others serve 1.8 million people in the Baltimore region, including much of Howard and northern Anne Arundel counties. Unless there are serious water reductions or a significant rainfall, Glendening said, there is a 35-day water supply left at current consumption levels.

Howard County Public Works Director James M. Irvin said today that he had not been informed that the water supply was that low. The county receives water from Baltimore and the WSSC. "The last official word from them is everything's okay," he said.

Aides to Glendening said the 35-day estimate had been developed late Wednesday after experts reevaluated water supplies.

The governor said he was concerned about the low level of the Potomac, noting that its current flow was maintained only after being replenished for the first time ever by the Jennings Randolph Reservoir in Western Maryland.

But officials at the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin said heavy rain this week actually allowed them to scale back the release of water from the reservoir into the river. About 2.2 billion gallons have been released from the 13.4 billion-gallon reservoir this month. The replenishment was not necessary for consumers but to protect river wildlife, officials said.

Rainfall in Montgomery and Prince George's counties has been nearly 14 inches below normal in the past year, ranking them among the counties facing the worse deficits in rain.

Montgomery County Executive Douglas M. Duncan (D) called for countywide voluntary water-use reductions July 12. Residents have been urged to curtail lawn sprinkling and to take shorter showers, and the county is not washing firetrucks and is postponing controlled burns for firefighter training.

In Poolesville, which has been particularly hard hit, there are mandatory water restrictions in place. Several communities in Allegany, Calvert, Carroll, Cecil, Frederick, Washington and Wicomico counties also have mandatory bans.

Recommended Water Conservation Measures

- Do not water flowers or grass.
- Do not wash your car.
- Do not wash paved surfaces.
- Do not use water for ornamental fountains, waterfalls and reflecting pools.
- Do not use washing machines or dishwashers unless fully loaded.
- Do not water golf courses.
- Do not fill or top off swimming pools.
- Take shorter showers.
- Repair leaky faucets.

(Source: Maryland Department of the Environment)

In Virginia, Loudoun became the first county in the region to impose mandatory restrictions on water use last week. Fairfax City has asked residents to cut back voluntarily. Fifteen counties have sought assistance from the office of Gov. James S. Gilmore III (R) in obtaining federal disaster aid for farmers because of the drought.

Even if normal rainfall was to resume, Maryland and Virginia would get little drought relief, forecasters say, because the summertime evaporation rate exceeds the rainfall rate. The only way the region could climb out of its rainfall deficit would be to have a rainy winter or to have a tropical storm dump huge quantities of water, which could mean dangerous flooding.

As for the immediate weather future, National Weather Service meteorologist Dewey Walston holds out little hope for relief, noting that the forecast for the next 10 days calls for "more of the same -- hot and dry."

Staff writers D'Vera Cohn, Ann O'Hanlon, Linda Perlstein, Fern Shen and Scott Wilson contributed to this report.

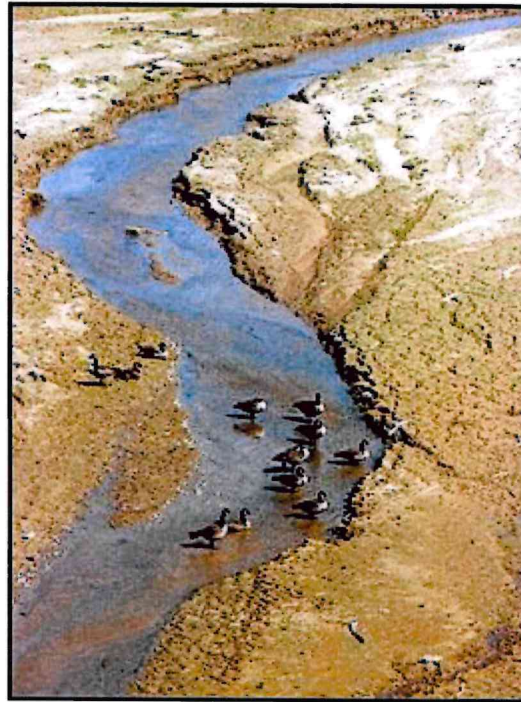
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Parched Earth

Image 2 of 10
Canadian geese wade in Liberty Reservoir in Eldersburg, Md. This area of the reservoir is usually covered by at least six feet of water.

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Joe Giza — AP

[Story](#)

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Conservers say only rain can forestall more water restrictions

By **BORIS E. HARTL**
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The message from Carroll County and Baltimore officials is simple: Continue to voluntarily conserve water now, or suffer the consequences of possible mandatory water restrictions later.

With the region suffering from a dry winter and below-average rainfall accumulations, county leaders are urging voluntary conservation efforts to continue throughout the upcoming months. The aim is to lessen the blow of an impending severe drought that has affected much of the East Coast.

Deer Park weather observer Ralph Hartsock said no relief is in sight, and the Maryland Department of the Environment placed Carroll under a drought warning in January.

"We need long days of rainy days, and all-day soakers," he said. "And they are not in the cards."

Hartsock said his location received 33.99 inches of rain in 2001 — 8 inches below normal. For this year, the area received 2.27 inches in January (about one inch below normal) and .26 so far this month.

"If this weather pattern does not turn around shortly, then the word 'catastrophic' is going to be used to describe this summer," he said.

County officials hope to avoid placing any watering bans on their more than 7,800 customers this summer by preaching voluntary water conservation.

County Public Works Director Doug Myers said the Freedom Water Treatment Plant is currently able to process more than 2 million gallons of water a day to meet usage in the Freedom area. The average water usage totals from Feb. 13 to Tuesday was 2.12 million

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Drought

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gallons of water per day.

The true test will come starting in April, however, when people begin to increase their water usage by watering their lawns and washing their cars, Myers said.

When water consumption averaged more than 3 million gallons a day in 1999, the county responded by imposing mandatory restrictions.

The county first passed a mandatory outdoor water use ban in 1997 and then switched to an odd-even water use schedule. Water restrictions are in effect in Carroll municipalities including Westminster and Mount Airy.

"Is there going to come a time [for mandatory] restrictions," Myers asked rhetorically. "Could be, but probably unlikely."

In Baltimore, public works officials have tapped the Susquehanna River and mixed the water with the city's reservoirs.

Public Works spokesman Kurt Kocher said the combination has worked, and the city is able to supply water to its 1.8 million customers through its three reservoirs — Liberty, Loch Raven and Pretty Boy.

Liberty, which also serves the South Carroll water customers, is operating at 62 percent. That figure is still 16 percent below normal, Kocher said.

"The reservoirs all together have stabilized at 58 percent," he said. "If we get some rain, we should be able to raise the level."

Reach staff writer **Boris E. Hartl** at 410-751-5902 or bhartl@leniofmd.com.

Drillers report failing wells

BY **CARRIE ANN MILLER**
TIMES STAFF WRITER

While Carroll County residents on public water worry about the shallow waterline in Liberty Reservoir, many residents dependent on groundwater have gotten a sharper warning of a possible drought — a dried-up well.

Well drillers across the county said they have seen a drastic increase in wells drying up for this time of year.

People normally think of the summer months as the time when most wells are susceptible to drying up, said Ron Kyker, of Westminster Rotary Well Drilling Inc. But actually, the worst time is usually in the fall, after there has been lower rainfall and higher water usage in the summer.

The groundwater should be recharging in winter and spring, he said, so having wells dry up now is unusual, he said.

"Nobody thinks too much about water until something like this happens," Kyker said. "People really got to use common sense in a situation like this."

The wells that have been affected the most tend to be 50 to 100 feet deep, Kyker said, but he has seen wells drying up at old and new homes in Carroll, Baltimore and Howard counties.

Dwight Phillips, of Phillips Well Drilling in Westminster, said that many of the wells that are going dry have had problems in the past few years. Drought-like conditions during what should be the wet season have pushed the wells until they had no more to give.

"I've been in the business 22 years, and I've never seen it this bad," Phillips said. Phillips said he has been getting 10 to 12 calls per week for existing wells that have gone dry.

The whole state has been suffering from below-average rainfall over an extended period of time, which has lowered the water table in many places. Ralph Hartsock, a weather observer in Deer Park, said that when it rains, it takes three months for the water to soak in and reach the water table.

"Even if it rained today and the pattern changed, it still wouldn't be until May or June to be beneficial to the wells," Hartsock said. "Right now, we

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Wells

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just need it to start raining."

The low water table has also caused the County Health Department's Bureau of Environmental Health to delay wet weather soils percolation tests. Percolation tests are required before wells and septic systems can be put in place on a new property.

Wet weather soils percolation tests are required when the highest water table can be expected in the area for sewage disposal to make sure the soils can handle discharge under all conditions, said Leigh Broder-

ick, a supervisor in the bureau.

The county usually expects the water table to be at its highest from Feb. 1 through April 30. However, data from county monitoring wells have shown a below normal shallow groundwater level. The well data combined with the below-average rainfall this year led the bureau to delay testing until at least March 4.

Broderick said the bureau will continue to evaluate water table conditions and amount of rainfall on a weekly basis.

"I think a lot of surveyors were expecting this, and I would have been surprised if we hadn't had to delay," Broderick said.