

Senate Bill 531 - The Water Safety and Cybersecurity Act of 2023

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Testimony: The proposed legislation appears to be intended to hold Maryland's water suppliers accountable and prevent water crises; however, the bill contains exceptions to Baltimore City and the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC), **the largest water suppliers in the state**, per paragraph 9-430. The bill proposes to impose additional reporting requirements upon smaller water suppliers who have limited resources to perform the additional work yet doesn't serve most of Maryland's public-water consumers considering the large exceptions. Both WSSC and Baltimore City have imposed boil water advisories within the past 12 months and these suppliers are a major source of water supply for surrounding counties. I write to express concern that this bill will impose a disproportionate burden upon water suppliers who have limited resources to deliver clean water to its residents, while providing no additional resources to support the extra work. While the bill appears well-intentioned to hold water suppliers accountable and prevent water crises, all water suppliers should be held to the same standards. Most notably, **Howard County and Baltimore County are supplied nearly all their water directly via Baltimore City**, so granting exception to Baltimore City for these accountability requirements **places both Howard County's and Baltimore County's residents at-risk to lose water supply from Baltimore City** if the city does not self-regulate their water system to the same standards.