

An Affiliate of
the Maryland Association
of Counties, Inc.



Reply to:

DATE: 02/15/2023
TO: Members, Education, Energy and the Environment Committee
FROM: Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors
RE: Senate Bill 407 Drinking Water – Innovative Potable Reuse Pilot Program – Establishment

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (Conference), an affiliate of the Maryland Association of Counties, **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 407 with amendments.

The Conference sees great value in exploration of water reuse programs and generally supports this pilot program, however the specifics of this legislation, as drafted, were initially cause for concern. The introduction of amendments that eliminates the direct injection of treated sewage effluent (“reclaimed water”) into confined aquifers (“Environmental Buffer”) that hundreds of thousands of Marylanders depend on for safe, clean drinking water is essential to our support. The Conference has assurances that this will not be part of the final bill.

We believe there is a direct conflict between the current definition of “reclaimed water” and the water quality criteria described in this bill, even though the same term is used. We believe that this needs to be addressed in order for this statute to be clearly interpreted.

Additionally, there are many different harmful and emerging constituents in wastewater that we don’t completely understand yet (including PFAS, phthalates, bisphenol A, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, herbicides, radionuclides and thousands of other synthetic compounds) which may or may not be removed from the wastewater prior to conversion to potable drinking water. As such, we believe that enforcement of these treatment parameters is critical. The Conference urges both potential permittees and the Department of the Environment to exercise the utmost diligence and vigorous enforcement of these provisions to ensure that we protect drinking water reservoirs and public health.

Fresh, potable water is our most precious resource, and our confined or unconfined sources should not be taken for granted. We must continue to be good stewards of our precious surface water and groundwater resources.

The Conference recommends a **FAVORABLE** report provided amendments are made.

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