

---

**CITY OF WESTMINSTER**  
45 West Main Street  
Westminster, Maryland 21157

---



---

**TELEPHONE:**  
Local (410) 848-9000  
Baltimore Line (410) 876-1313  
[www.westminstermd.gov](http://www.westminstermd.gov)

---

February 21, 2023

House Environment and Transportation Committee  
Room 251  
House Office Building  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: HB 848 Drinking Water – Innovative Potable Reuse Pilot Program – Establishment

Dear Chairman Barve and Committee Members:

The City of Westminster is writing to encourage you to support HB 848, which will offer the City of Westminster residents and businesses a new water source to address long-standing drought issues.

The City of Westminster owns and operates a water distribution system that provides service for 38,000 users within the City and in parts of unincorporated Carroll County. For decades the City relied upon drilled wells that were permitted for specific amounts of water. The distribution system's utilization was less water than was allocated by the permit, so by all accounts everything seemed fine. No one realized that we were stretching the system's limits because we were not exceeding permitted capacity. In 2001/2002, however, the region experienced drought conditions, which severely reduced the water available to support the existing customers on the system.

The outlook at the time was grim, and the City was forced to consider mandating rolling water outages in order to guarantee an adequate water supply to Carroll Hospital System. Instead of rolling outages, the City was able to truck in emergency water from Medford Quarry. This ensured continuity of operations for the hospital.

As a result of that dire situation, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) issued the City with a consent order that outlined the amount of water that the City could allocate for new use/change in use, such as a new occupant to a vacant space. The total water allocation amounts permitted by the MDE consent order include not only the system's current wells and surface water plant, but also an agreement that the City has with Medford Quarry to provide approximately 750,000 gallons per day that we could access in an emergency. However, this emergency option is not a guaranteed solution; that agreement will expire in 8 years, and it includes a clause that allows the quarry property owner to terminate the agreement with only 180 days notice.

It is imperative for the City to find a water source that is both permanent and City-owned and operated. Without that the City cannot meet the compliance guidelines outlined in the MDE consent order. A permanent solution for this is PUREWater Westminster, which is an indirect potable water reuse project that the City has been designing and piloting for the past 3 years. The water purification process for this

indirect potable reuse project includes 3 steps: nanomembrane filtration, reverse osmosis, and advanced oxidation with ultraviolet light. The end result is purified water safe for drinking. However, since this is an indirect potable reuse project, the PUREWater Westminster product will be stored in the Cranberry Reservoir, blended with the reservoir's natural water, and then treated again through the Cranberry Surface Water Plant. This type of project exists in other states throughout the country but will be the first indirect potable water reuse project in the State of Maryland.

The City funded the pilot demonstration project for PUREWater Westminster through a grant from the United States Bureau of Reclamation (USBR). The City received letters of support for its pilot demonstration project from Senator Van Hollen, MDE, Carroll County, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Carroll County Water Resource Coordination Council, Carroll County Chamber of Commerce, University of Maryland, Maryland General Assembly Legislative District 5 Delegation, and Water Reuse. Copies of those letters of support are attached. The pilot demonstration project was operated by City of Westminster staff, directed by our engineering firm WATEK Engineering Corporation, tested by the University of Maryland, and reviewed by the MDE.

Once fully implemented, the PUREWater Westminster project will provide the City with a new drinking water source that is City-owned, permanent, and completely drought-resistant. The PUREWater Westminster project is able to offer up to 1,000,000 gallons a day, which covers the 750,000 gallons a day of emergency water and offers the City a small amount (250,000 gallons) to address new uses, such as the new Carroll County sheriff's office building.

The City has exhausted all other options to provide new water sources to the region. The City's PUREWater Westminster project is an efficient and effective solution to this compliance issue. Upon implementation, the City will be able to protect the health and safety of its water customers, while ensuring water to the hospital and for fire protection.

Total implementation cost for this project is \$6,590,000, and includes an engineering cost of \$1,590,000, funded by the City, and a construction cost of \$5,000,000. The City received a federal earmark in the FY23 budget in the amount of \$2,945,000 to fund construction, as well as a grant from Carroll County in the amount of \$1,530,152 for construction. The City is prepared to fund the remaining construction balance if no other grants become available.

The PUREWater Westminster project is the highest priority for the City of Westminster. This is a regional issue that we think requires a regional response. We appreciate your support and encourage you to approve HB 848.

Sincerely,



Dr. Mona Becker  
Mayor