



Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies, Inc.

Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission

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Laurel, MD 20707

Tel: 301-206-7008

MEMBER AGENCIES

February 28, 2023

Allegany County
Anne Arundel County
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Baltimore County
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City of Cumberland
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Frederick County
City of Hagerstown
Harford County
City of Havre de Grace
Howard County
Ocean City
Pocomoke City
Queen Anne's County
City of Salisbury
Somerset County Sanitary District
St. Mary's Metro. Comm.
Washington County
WSSC Water

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve
Chair, House Environment and Transportation Committee
Room 251, House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Request for Amendments -- HB 893 (Water Access for All Protection Act)

Dear Chairman Barve:

On behalf of the Maryland Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies (MAMWA), I am writing to request amendments to HB 893, which would prohibit: (i) water utilities from disconnecting service to certain identified individuals, even if a bill is significantly overdue; (ii) many water utilities from enforcing a lien for unpaid fees; and (iii) a sanitary commission from enforcing an emergency water conservation order by disconnecting service. MAMWA is a statewide association of local governments and wastewater treatment agencies that serve approximately 95% of the State's sewered population. Many Members also operate public water systems.

CONSULTANT MEMBERS

Black & Veatch
GHD Inc.
Greeley and Hansen Engineers
Hazen & Sawyer
HDR Engineering, Inc.
Jacobs
Ramboll Americas
Whitman, Requardt & Assoc.
Xylem, Inc.

MAMWA sees the good intent behind HB 893, and, of course, Members understand that some customers have difficulty paying water and/or sewer bills (in fact, MAMWA Members already work with these customers on payment arrangements to assist during financially stressful times). That said, if we are not collecting revenues from some customers, MAMWA Members will be compelled to recoup those lost revenues from our remaining customers to pay the fixed costs of running a municipal utility, forcing water and sewer rates up across the State. County and municipal water and wastewater plants are critically important public facilities that are very costly to operate.

GENERAL COUNSEL

AquaLaw PLC

For these reasons, MAMWA requests amendments to create a statewide fund to assist with overdue water and sewer bills (with funding from the State's general revenues).

Please feel free to contact me with any questions at Lisa@AquaLaw.com or 804-716-9021.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lisa M. Ochsenhirt".

Lisa M. Ochsenhirt
MAMWA Deputy General Counsel

cc: House Environment and Transportation Committee Members, HB 893 Sponsor