



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 843

Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force

Date: March 1, 2023	Position:	Support
To: House Environment and Transportation Committee	From:	Doug Myers Maryland Senior Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 843 which creates a task force to consider a joint jurisdictional management authority for water and wastewater utility management in the Baltimore metropolitan region.

Recent failures at Baltimore's Patapsco and Back River Wastewater Treatment plants and the discovery of E. coli bacteria in drinking water resulting in a boiled water order underscores the need to address operations and maintenance issues at these facilities. Indeed, the failures at the wastewater treatment plants resulted in discharges to surface waters well in excess of permit limits effectively reversing progress on the state's Watershed Implementation Plan under the Chesapeake Bay Blueprint for 2020 and 2021.

CBF supports the creation of the Task Force, specifically to address staffing, training, certification and management of facility workforces and the logistical and financial support that will be needed to retain a trained and certified workforce at these facilities into the future. Significant capital upgrades have been made through the Bay Restoration Fund allowing these plants to theoretically meet enhanced nutrient reduction standards relied upon to meet Bay cleanup goals. We cannot sacrifice those investments or the health of our public and ecological resources by allowing the system to spiral into disrepair. HB 843 ensures that the important conversations necessary to reform governance of the Baltimore water and wastewater utility systems move forward.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 843.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney at mstegman@cbf.org.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.