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BILL NO.: **HB 843**

TITLE: Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force

SPONSOR: Delegate Smith

COMMITTEE: Environment and Transportation

POSITION: **SUPPORT**

DATE: March 1, 2023

Baltimore County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 843 – Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force. This vital legislation would establish the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force.

For decades, residents of Baltimore County and Baltimore City have been served by shared water and wastewater utilities that are owned and operated by the City of Baltimore, and currently managed by an agreement dating back to 1972. This agreement does not reflect our region’s incredible growth since it was put in place over half a century ago. In 2021, Baltimore County joined Baltimore City to release a comprehensive 3rd-party review of the regional water and wastewater utilities that examined the system’s operations, management, and maintenance and identified opportunities for improvements. This evaluation also recommended that Baltimore City and Baltimore County explore regional solutions in order to help standardize high quality services across the region, improve customer experience, and lower shared costs.

HB 843 creates a Task force on Baltimore Regional Water and wastewater to do precisely that. This legislation would address will advance collaborative decision making to provide safe and equitable water services in a way that prioritizes fairness, equity, and stability among rate payers. It will also afford shared responsibility for long-term capital planning, operation and maintenance, and prudent governance. By charting a shared vision for a modern, efficient, and equitable system, we will be better prepared to serve our residents, businesses, and visitors for decades to come.

Accordingly, Baltimore County requests a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 843. For more information, please contact Jenn Aiosa, Director of Government Affairs at jaiosa@baltimorecountymd.gov.