



Testimony in SUPPORT of SB572

**Environment – Collection and Reporting of Drinking Water and Wastewater Data and Information
– Requirements**

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Jose Coronado-Flores , On Behalf of CASA

February 6th, 2024

Dear Honorable Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

CASA is pleased to offer **favorable testimony in support of SB572 - Environment – Collection and Reporting of Drinking Water and Wastewater Data and Information – Requirements**. CASA is the largest immigrant services and advocacy organization in Maryland, and in the Mid-Atlantic region, with a membership of over 155,000 Black and Latino immigrants and working families.

SB572 is important legislation that will address the lack of transparency on behalf of water utility companies. In particular, this bill will require water utilities to report on critical information that concerns low-income communities of color. For example, SB572 would require utilities to report how many low-income households they serve, the amount owed in late payments, water shutoffs, and what households are served by lead pipes. This information would ultimately be public and accessible to all Marylanders on an MDE platform.

Water is a vital resource that everyone uses. However, currently, the details of whom and how one's water is provided can be opaque to a regular user. Data concerning how much debt certain communities hold to water utilities can eventually be used to offer aid to low-income households, and knowing if one's water is provided by lead pipes can also be used to prevent lead exposure and to hold water utilities accountable to replacing these pipes or making sure they are up to safe standards. CASA urges a favorable report.

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