



City Union of Baltimore

Local 800, AFT, AFL-CIO

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Antoinette Ryan-Johnson

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**Written Testimony Submitted to the
Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, President, City Union of Baltimore, AFT Local 800
SB 1174 – Baltimore Regional Water Governance Model Workgroup
April 2, 2024**

FAVORABLE-WITH-AMENDMENTS

Good afternoon Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee. My name is Antoinette Ryan-Johnson, and I am the President of the City Union of Baltimore, a union for Baltimore City employees, including almost 400 city employees working in the city's water and wastewater department. We call for a favorable-with-amendments report for SB 1174, the bill that would create a workgroup to study the potential to create a regional water utility for Baltimore City and County. We have appended the proposed amendments to our written testimony for your review.

The City Union of Baltimore represents city workers who work in the water and wastewater systems for Baltimore city, our members perform many duties for the City including supervising the operations and employees of the fresh water and wastewater plants, testing and treating fresh water to ensure it is safe for human consumption, testing and treating waste water to ensure it is environmentally safe and free of harmful contaminants. Other employees supervise and maintain the billing system in Baltimore City, generating revenue for the City. While others maintain the residential and commercial meter systems as well as the maintaining the above ground and underground utilities of the water system. These members not only have particular, valuable, front-line insights on the strengths and weaknesses of the current system, but also have a right to participate in larger conversations over decisions that may impact their work. Their representation on this workgroup is a must. Indeed, any changes to the terms and conditions of employment for these workers must, according to law, be bargained with the exclusive representative union.

Members of the committee, the proposed work of this workgroup must not be understated: the undertaking of a monumental task to re-envision how water, a fundamental human right, is fairly and equitably distributed to residents in both our city and Baltimore County, must not be taken lightly. This task must have ample input from the community members most impacted by

decisions being made, and include voices of those who are engaged in the day-to-day operations of the delivery and upkeep of our city's water system. Our amendments to the taskforce membership portion of the bill call for the mayor and the county executive to appoint at least one representative each from the union of City and County employees currently working for the water systems. In addition, the amendment calls for the workgroup to take privatization off the table, and only consider publicly operated and managed examples.

Again, we call for a favorable-with-amendments report on SB 1174. Thank you.

Proposed Amendments to SB 1174

On page 1

16 (iv) ~~five-six~~ members appointed by the Mayor of Baltimore City, **one of which must be a representative from a labor organization certified as the exclusive representative for city employees working in the water and wastewater utility;**

17 (v) ~~three-four~~ members appointed by the county executive of Baltimore County, **one of which must be a representative from a labor organization certified as the exclusive representative for county employees working in the water and wastewater utility;**

On page 2, insert

1 **(2) The labor representatives named in (1) (iv) and (1) (v) must not be from the same international union.**

2 ~~(2)~~ **(3)** Each member shall:

....

On page 4

After 13, insert

14 **(k) The Workgroup may not consider or make recommendations related to a privately operated or managed regional water governance model.**

"Strength in Unity"

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