

**AFT-Maryland Written Testimony Submitted to the  
Maryland Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment  
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. AFT-Maryland is the state federation for a number of county and municipal employee unions, including the City Union of Baltimore (AFT Local 800) and the Baltimore County Federation of Public Employees (AFT Local 4883). Each of these unions are the exclusive representative for hundreds of public employees that could be potentially impacted by this legislation. We are calling for a favorable-with-amendments report from this committee for SB 1174, that would place two union seats, each representing an exclusive representative organization in the city and county. Additionally, we are calling for an amendment (in the same posture as the House version of this bill) that would limit the scope of the workgroup's study to only publicly run and managed, not privatized, options. The proposed amendments addressing our concerns are appended to our testimony.

Our concerns with this legislation can be summarized thusly:

- The workgroup created to study the future of the water utility in Baltimore has the potential to materially, perhaps drastically, change the terms and conditions of both the city and county employees who work in the current system.
- Both the city and county charter require changes to the terms and conditions of employment to be a mandatory subject of bargaining with each certified, legal exclusive representative for the impacted workers. (County Charter § 4-5-310; City Charter Article II. § 55). Failing to negotiate in good faith over these terms and conditions of employment would be, in both cases, an unfair labor practice.
- No one union is the exclusive representative for the hundreds of city and county employees that will be impacted by the recommendations of the workgroup. No one union can legally speak for the employees that work in the current system.

Because county and city employee voices should be made part of the studies, deliberations, and conversations about the future of the water and wastewater utilities in the city and county, and because any implemented changes must be negotiated with each exclusive representative, it only makes sense to have at least two union representatives, one from the city and one from the county, as permanent members of this workgroup.

Again, AFT-Maryland is calling for a favorable-with-amendments report to 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.**