



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***House Bill 256
Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) Workgroup***

Position: Support
Committee: Environment and Transportation
Date: February 14, 2024
From: Les Knapp

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 256. The bill creates a workgroup to study the feasibility of establishing a Waterway Incident Notification System (WINS) to notify members of the public of certain waterway emergencies.

WINS would notify members of the public, including recreational boaters and commercial watermen, of active waterway emergencies involving a person at risk of death or serious bodily harm, emergency marine events, or marine hazards. This includes certain environmental emergencies, such as hazardous substance spills.

The workgroup's membership consists of state legislators, state and local emergency management personnel, and representatives from the Maryland Departments of the Environment, Emergency Management, and Information Technology. The Department of Emergency Management shall provide staff for the workgroup.

Considering the feasibility of enhancing public notification systems for environmental and other marine hazards benefits and protects the residents of Maryland. Accordingly, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 256.