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January 28, 2025

Legislative Position: Favorable  
Senate Bill 265  
Environment - Reservoir Augmentation Permit - Establishment  
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Dear Chairman Feldman and members of the committee:

Established in 1950, the Associated Utility Contractors of Maryland, Inc. (AUC) is dedicated to advancing the utility contracting industry across the state. Our mission is to foster strong relationships between utility contractors and their clients, uphold the highest professional standards within the industry, and elevate the reputation of utility professionals within the business community. We actively advocate for public policies that address industry challenges and contribute to improving Maryland's overall business environment.

As introduced, SB 265 establishes a formal Reservoir Augmentation Program within the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). As the statewide association representing the interests of underground utility contractors, AUC supports the establishment of this program and the associated permit.

The Reservoir Augmentation Permit will allow for the planned placement of reclaimed water into a surface water reservoir used as a source for a drinking water treatment facility. The permit will lead to more utility contracting professionals conducting this type of water utility work, funding to regulate the work and as stated in the bill's fiscal note, "the permit is expected to result in an increase in the number of water reuse projects in the State." As a founding member of the nationwide Clean Water Construction Coalition, increased funding and focus on Maryland's water infrastructure is a priority of AUC.

The establishment of this permit will also contribute to the state's efforts to promote water conservation and sustainability. The permit's requirements, such as the feasibility study and the right of entry for inspection, will ensure that reservoir augmentation projects are conducted in a safe and environmentally responsible manner.

Overall, SB 265 will have a positive impact on the underground utility industry, leading to increased economic activity and job creation.

Whitney Beall  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PO Box 249  
Annapolis Junction, MD 20701

P. 410-750-2554  
[whitney@aucofmd.com](mailto:whitney@aucofmd.com)



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We urge the committee to issue a **favorable report on SB 265** and we look forward to working with the MDE to ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,

The Associated Utility Contractors of Maryland (AUC)