

**Favorable with Amendments - HB 1062**  
**Department of the Environment - Community Water and Sewerage Systems - Cybersecurity**  
**Planning and Assessments**  
Environment and Transportation Committee  
Hearing Date: 26 February 2025

The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) writes today in support with amendments of **HB 1062 Department of the Environment - Community Water and Sewerage Systems - Cybersecurity Planning and Assessments**.

**HB 1062** is a complex bill that would require the Cyber Preparedness Unit within MDEM to provide direct planning support to community water and sewerage systems, develop risk communications plans, and conduct an annual tabletop exercise.

The Department acknowledges the risks posed by cyber attacks on various sectors in Maryland. The Cyber Preparedness Unit was established in part to work closely with local governments to plan for these attacks, and MDEM agrees that planning, training, and exercising are key elements to increasing preparedness in Maryland. However, local governments have the primary authority for responding to emergencies in their communities, including impacts to community water systems and issuing public information and warnings. Private entities are responsible for conducting their own planning, training, and exercises, and both local and State governments often participate in these efforts under a whole community approach to preparedness.

MDEM's amendments to the bill, outlined below, reflect this standard by shifting the Department's focus from interacting directly with community water systems to providing local emergency management organizations with guidance related to these efforts. The Department consulted with the MACo Emergency Management affiliate, MDE, and DoIT in the development of these amendments.

**Amendment 1**

Page 5, Lines 3-6. Replace "Maryland Department of Emergency Management" with "local emergency manager." Community water systems should be communicating directly with the local emergency manager before, during, and after emergencies. As local governments need support, they request that support from MDEM.

**Amendment 2**

Page 8, Lines 25-28. Re-phrase to, “Providing guidance to local emergency management organizations for incidents against water and wastewater facilities.” In Maryland’s tiered emergency management system, MDEM provides planning support and technical assistance at the request of county emergency management agencies and does not plan directly for private sector entities.

#### **Amendment 3**

Page 9, Lines 5-7. Strike the provision. In coordination with emergency management stakeholders, the Department develops an annual integrated preparedness plan which outlines training and exercises to be conducted each year. This plan is a federal requirement and reflects the ever-changing threat and hazard landscape. It is not best practice to establish a hazard-specific, permanent exercise requirement in law as it provides limited flexibility to the Department to use other scenarios which may be a higher risk in a given year.

#### **Amendment 4**

Page 9, Lines 8-10. Rephrase to, “Develop guidance for crisis and emergency risk communication for local emergency management organizations in the State.” Local emergency management organizations are the lead authority for public information and warning. MDEM recommends instead providing guidance for public information and warning.

#### **Amendment 5**

Page 10, Line 3. Strike “Know the Threats” to ensure MDEM has flexibility to change website headings and page names as needed.

#### **Amendment 6**

Page 10, Lines 4-5. Strike. The Department prefers to retain flexibility to use the best possible public alert and warning system. MDReady is already in use and managed by the Department, and codification will only limit the Department’s future flexibility in using other systems as appropriate.

We are aware that in addition to our amendments, MDE and DoIT also have proposed amendments to this legislation. MDEM fully supports those amendments offered by our sister agencies.

In conclusion, the Maryland Department of Emergency Management respectfully requests a favorable report with the amendments proffered by the Department as well as MDE and DoIT on **HB 1062**. If you have any questions, please contact Anna Sierra, MDEM legislative liaison: [anna.sierra1@maryland.gov](mailto:anna.sierra1@maryland.gov).