



MARYLAND MILITARY COALITION

Serving Veterans through Legislative Advocacy

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Mark Korman
The Honorable Regina T. Boyce
House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
6 Bladen Street
Annapolis, MD 21401

Subject: Request for a **Favorable Report – HB1062 Department of the Environment – Community Water and Sewerage Systems – Cybersecurity Planning and Assessments**

Dear Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce and Distinguished Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the Maryland Military Coalition, and as the former Senior Public Health Advisor to the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, I write to recommend a **Favorable Report – HB1062 Department of the Environment – Community Water and Sewerage Systems – Cybersecurity Planning and Assessments**. This bill is intended to “harden” community water and sewage systems from the threat of cybersecurity breaches that could disrupt operations over a prolonged time. Specifically the legislation requires that community water and sewage system providers undertake recommended cybersecurity measures to ensure that systems, communications and information are protected against damage, unauthorized use or modification and exploitation, as well as a requirement to report cybersecurity incidents. Cybersecurity recommendations include awareness, training, best practices, and plans for disruption of service due to cyber incidents including ransomware attacks including alternative water supplies and mutual aid agreements when water supplies are compromised. Seminal to these efforts is provider participation in the Maryland Information Sharing and Analysis Center and an annual table top exercise.

Secure water and sewage services are essential to life in both civilian and military communities. The bill’s requirement for coordination among the Department of the Environment, Department of Information Technology, and Maryland Department of Emergency Management reflects both the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense’s emphasis on partnering with state and local entities to secure critical infrastructure. The bill’s proactive cybersecurity standards and incident reporting requirements are critical steps to mitigate these threats.

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Passage of this bill is necessary because in 2024 alone, there were **FIVE cybersecurity events involving water or water treatment plants in the United States:**

1. **Veolia North America. January 2024.** The company operates 8,500 water and wastewater facilities around the world, as well as in all 50 US states. Online bill payment systems were infiltrated with theft of personally identifiable information. Veolia took targeted back-end systems and servers offline as a defensive measure. Customers experienced delays using the online bill payment systems as a result of this action. Water or wastewater treatment operations did not appear to have been impacted.
2. **Texas Cities: Hale Center, Muleshoe, Lockney and Abernathy. January 2024.** Multiple water and wastewater plants in Texas, United States, were hit by cyber-attacks in early 2024. Videos posted online by the purported hackers showed them interacting with various supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems remotely, arbitrarily adjusting settings and controls. The common link was the vendor software used by the communities. In most cases suspicious activity was caught before material damage was caused, although in one city, a water tank overflowed for more than 30 minutes until operations switched to manual control while steps were taken to resecure systems. The attacks were attributed to a Russia-linked group.
3. **Tipton, Indiana, April 2024.** The Cyber Army of Russia posted a video online showing how hackers allegedly interacted with the systems of the Tipton Wastewater Treatment Plant. Facility staff noticed irregular activity through standard process monitoring of plant operations, and transitioned systems to manual control while the matter was investigated.
4. **Arkansas City Water Treatment Facility, September 2024.** The water treatment facility in Arkansas City, Kansas, experienced a cybersecurity incident on 22 September 2024, leading to a temporary switch to manual operations. Despite the incident, there was no disruption to the water supply or service delivery. Enhanced security measures were implemented, and authorities were involved to resolve the situation.
5. **American Water, October 2024.** Week-long outage of billing and customer account systems. The attack, discovered on 3 October 2024, led to the shutdown of the company's call center and rescheduling of customer appointments. Despite these disruptions, water and wastewater facilities were not impacted. The company, serving 14 million people, paused billing and took measures to protect systems and data.

Likely ***there were more incidents*** in the United States, as most companies prefer not to publicly report their incidents.

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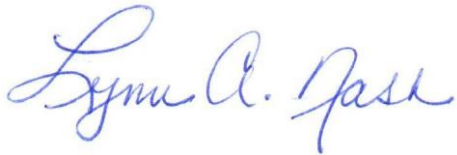
The policies in HB 1062/ SB 871 focus on strengthening cybersecurity for community water and sewerage systems, which are vital to civilian communities, military bases, personnel, and their families. The information-sharing mechanisms between state and local governments and our 20 Maryland military bases improve situational awareness and unify cybersecurity strategies across government levels.

For these reasons, the Maryland Military Coalition **STRONGLY** supports a **HB1062 Department of the Environment – Community Water and Sewerage Systems – Cybersecurity Planning and Assessments** and asks you for a **FAVORABLE Report**.

The Maryland Military Coalition is a registered non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization comprised of 22 prominent Maryland-based veteran and military groups, representing over 150,000 service-connected individuals, including those currently serving, veterans, retirees and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

We wish to thank Delegate Harrison for her on-going support of **ALL** of the uniformed services community in Maryland.

Respectfully,



Lynn A. Nash
CAPT (R), U.S. Public Health Service
Communications Director



Member Organizations of the Maryland Military Coalition

Air Force Sergeants Association

American Military Society

American Minority Veterans Research Project

Association of the United States Navy

Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Disabled American Veterans

Fleet Reserve Association of Annapolis

Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.A

Maryland Air National Guard Retirees' Association

Maryland Veterans Chamber of Commerce

Military Officers Association of America

Military Order of the Purple Heart

Military Order of the World Wars

Montford Point Marines of America

National Association of Black Veterans

National Association of Retired Federal Employees, Maryland Veterans

Naval Enlisted Reserve Association

NOAA Association of Commissioned Officers

Platoon 22

Reserve Organization of America

Society of Military Widows

Veterans of Foreign Wars