



Wes Moore, Governor  
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor  
Josh Kurtz, Secretary  
David Goshorn, Deputy Secretary

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March 5, 2025

**BILL NUMBER: HOUSE BILL 1296 - FIRST READER**

**SHORT TITLE: ENVIRONMENT - MANAGED AQUIFER RECHARGE PILOT PROGRAM – ESTABLISHMENT**

**DEPARTMENT’S POSITION: SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS**

### **EXPLANATION OF DEPARTMENT’S POSITION**

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The Department has been in conversations with the sponsor and with MDE on amendments to the proposed legislation. Water sustainability is a long-term (greater than 50 years) concern in Maryland. This program establishes a pilot program for Maryland to learn from when preparing for these future concerns. The amendments discussed provide substantive and necessary changes to the original bill language to aid in the protection of the existing drinking water resources including the requirement for reverse osmosis treatment for confined aquifer injection, establishing a need for the injection, establishing a requirement to prove injection is the best alternative in solving the stated problem, allowing for future contaminant levels to cease the injection, and for public hearings to ensure citizens are aware of the injections.

These amendments are critical to ensure drinking water is protected in the State of Maryland. There can be long-term risks associated with injection into the pristine drinking water supplies of Marylanders. These amendments ensure that an existing problem does exist that weighs these risks with the returns, ensures long-term water protection from contaminants of which we are aware and those of which we’re not currently aware, and ensures public engagement.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

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SB942/HB1131 were introduced during the 2024 legislative session and both bills were subsequently withdrawn.

### **BILL EXPLANATION**

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This bill establishes a pilot program to be administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment for the injection of treated wastewater into drinking water aquifers to address water sustainability concerns such as land subsidence and/or saltwater intrusion.

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