



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in Support of HB1296**

Testimony by Delegate Andrew Pruski

March 5, 2025 – Environment and Transportation Committee

**What the Bill Does:**

The purpose of HB1296 is to establish the Managed Aquifer Recharge Pilot Program and authorizes the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to review, permit, and regulate a process to test the use of treated reclaimed water from a demonstration facility as a source for groundwater augmentation. Additionally, this bill would provide a regulatory path for a county to establish a Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR) demonstration facility on a small, localized scale in order to test more long-term strategies for groundwater resiliency and nutrient discharges to the Chesapeake Bay.

**Why the Bill is Important:**

Groundwater levels in Maryland and our region are slowly declining. This decline in water levels in our aquifers increases the risk of saltwater intrusion and land subsidence. Anne Arundel County has 533 miles of shoreline, so these risks are very concerning for not only Anne Arundel County, but for our neighboring counties as well.

As a bit of background: To address the challenges associated with the decline in water levels in our aquifers, Anne Arundel County launched Our wAater - a vital program that will provide long-term benefits by protecting our waterways and the Chesapeake Bay while also improving our groundwater supplies and water resiliency. One of the five core initiatives of the Our wAater program is an applied scientific research program for MAR. MAR is a technology to safely treat reclaimed wastewater to drinking water quality to replenish aquifers. This technology also removes PFAS, pharmaceuticals and personal care products prior to aquifer recharge.

The Managed Aquifer Recharge Pilot Program provides the regulatory framework for the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to permit, review, and regulate a Managed Aquifer Recharge pilot facility. MAR is an innovative, integrated, proven, long-term sustainable solution to meet water resource challenges impacting local water supplies and the Chesapeake Bay. Although MAR is new to Maryland, similar facilities have been tested and implemented in other states such as Nevada, New Mexico, California, Florida, and Virginia. Anne Arundel County has been operating a MAR testing facility informed by an independent scientific advisory panel for several years.

**On behalf of Maryland's future, I urge a favorable report on HB1296.**