



March 5, 2025

House Bill 1296
Environment - Managed Aquifer Recharge Pilot Program - Establishment
House Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1296 – Environment - Managed Aquifer Recharge Pilot Program - Establishment. This Bill would authorize 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.

Although the depletion of groundwater levels is not as severe in Maryland as it is in other regions, groundwater levels are still dropping. The continued decline of the aquifer water levels increases the risk of land subsidence and saltwater intrusion. With over 533 miles of shoreline, these are significant concerns for Anne Arundel County.

In an effort to get ahead of water supply constraints, Anne Arundel County has initiated a voluntary integrated plan (Our wAAter) to address long-term challenges associated with groundwater resiliency and nutrient discharges to the Chesapeake Bay. Our wAAter centers around five core initiatives, including an applied scientific research program for Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR). The County has been operating a testing facility informed by an independent scientific advisory panel for several years. Should current testing continue to show success, the County requests to proceed with the design and installation of a demonstration scale facility, including treatment and underground injection, on a small, localized scale.

MAR is an innovative, integrated, proven, long-term sustainable solution to meet water resource challenges impacting local water supplies and the Chesapeake Bay. As conceptualized, MAR will improve long-term groundwater resiliency and reduce pollution to the Bay and its tributaries. 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 appreciates the technical expertise provided by MDE and the Department of Natural Resources in guiding this project and legislation. We have discussed several conceptual amendments proposed by those departments and are amenable to those changes being incorporated into HB1296.

For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1296.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Steuart Pittman".

Steuart Pittman
County Executive