



TESTIMONY

COMMITTEE: House Environment and Transportation

DATE: February 4, 2026

POSITION: Favorable with Amendments

BILL: SB 264

On behalf of the Maryland Municipal League (MML), I am writing to express our support for SB 264 with amendments. The Maryland Municipal League is a statewide organization representing Maryland’s municipal governments, many of which operate their own public water systems. We recognize the importance of maintaining adequate residual disinfectant levels, conducting regular sampling, and promptly informing customers about potential disruptions that may affect water quality, as prescribed in SB 264. MML and its members are fully committed to safeguarding public health and enhancing transparency in water system operations.

While we are supportive of the bill’s overarching goals, several concerns raised by our member municipalities prompt us to respectfully request targeted amendments. Many municipalities estimate that the cost to comply with the increased residual mandates, staff training, expanded notification obligations, and enhanced record-keeping could range anywhere from \$10,000 to \$250,000 annually, depending on system size and current practices. These significant expenses could pose challenges, especially for smaller local governments, without additional funding support or a phased implementation approach. The bill’s current definition of a distribution system “disruption” is very broad and could inadvertently trigger notification requirements for routine maintenance activities, placing an unnecessary administrative burden on our public water systems. We urge the Committee to refine the language in the bill to narrowly define “disruption” and to provide resources or technical assistance to help municipalities meet these new mandates efficiently.

MML believes that public health can be best protected through a comprehensive approach that not only enhances water system monitoring, but also addresses best management practices within the private buildings (such as hospitals or long-term care facilities) where risks from legionella are highest. Therefore, we suggest that the bill encourage collaboration with building owners and support educational outreach regarding effective management of internal plumbing systems, which are typically outside municipal jurisdiction. Additionally, we are concerned that efforts to increase residual disinfectant levels could unintentionally lead to higher concentrations of hazardous disinfection byproducts. We recommend that the bill be amended to ensure that any requirements for residual disinfectant levels are balanced with Safe Drinking Water Act regulations concerning disinfection byproducts and allow for operational flexibility based on local water quality data.

MML represents 161 local governments and about 2 million Maryland residents.

The Maryland Municipal League appreciates the intent behind SB 264 and is eager to work with the Committee to advance a practical and effective framework for water system safety that will benefit all Marylanders. With the amendments we have outlined, we are pleased to offer our favorable with amendment recommendation. Thank you for your consideration on behalf of Maryland's cities and towns.

For more information relating to this piece of testimony, please contact:

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