



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 24th 2026

SB719

Data Privacy - Consumer Data, Public Records, and Message Switching System (Data Privacy Act)

Economic Matters Committee

Position: Favorable

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 719**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

Senate Bill 719 establishes strict limits on the land application of sewage sludge or related products containing PFAS chemicals, setting regulatory boundaries that prevent highly contaminated materials from being spread on agricultural fields or other land across Maryland. It also allows for limited blending of sewage sludge from multiple sources through September 2029, under careful regulation, while implementing monitoring and testing protocols to ensure environmental and public safety.

This policy reduces PFAS contamination in Maryland's soil, waterways, and agricultural systems by limiting the introduction of these persistent chemicals into the environment. PFAS is known as a "forever chemical," and without proper containment it can enter food systems, drinking water, and ecosystems in ways that jeopardize both human health and long-term ecological stability. By setting strong regulatory guidelines, the bill supports public health, protects Maryland farmers, and provides clearer expectations for wastewater treatment facilities and land management practices.

As Pope Francis affirms, environmental degradation disproportionately harms the poor, rural families, and those with limited resources to safeguard their health. This legislation offers broad and meaningful benefits across every level of Maryland society. By reducing exposure to toxic chemicals that can seep into crops, livestock, and water sources, it strengthens the health and safety of entire communities. Families gain the reassurance that the food on their tables and the environment they rely on are cleaner and safer. On a statewide level, the bill helps prevent costly environmental damage and protects Maryland's agricultural economy, which relies on the integrity of our soil, water, and public confidence in the safety of locally grown food. Altogether, these measures create a healthier, more resilient future for Maryland and safeguard the well-being of generations to come.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 719**.