



## TESTIMONY

**COMMITTEE:** Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment

**DATE:** February 24, 2026

**POSITION:** Favorable

**BILL:** SB 719

On behalf of the Maryland Municipal League (MML), representing Maryland’s municipalities and cities, I submit this testimony in strong support of Senate Bill 719, with an important request that funding assistance be included to address the serious challenges that lie ahead for our local governments.

Our communities have long been dedicated partners in advancing environmental stewardship and public health. Over recent years, PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, often dubbed “forever chemicals,” have emerged as a profound threat, not just to our natural resources, but to the livelihoods and wellbeing of Marylanders statewide. SB 719 makes critical advances by establishing clear, science-based standards for monitoring, reporting, and limiting PFAS in sewage sludge intended for land application. For us in municipal government, this legislation is not abstract policy, but a daily, real-world reality that involves both triumphs and ongoing tribulations.

Municipalities across Maryland have navigated a landscape that is often marked by uncertainty and flux when it comes to the management of biosolids and protection from emerging contaminants like PFAS. We have invested considerably in upgrading wastewater treatment systems and have actively participated in state and federal initiatives to ensure our practices protect human health and the environment. Yet, municipalities have too often found themselves caught in a tug-of-war, between evolving regulatory expectations and the persistent lack of state and federal funding for needed infrastructure improvements and technical expertise.

The unique and far-reaching requirements established by SB 719, quarterly or even monthly PFAS monitoring, source tracking studies, mitigation plans, and the potential for costly treatment upgrades, are necessary responses to a severe environmental challenge. However, these mandates are also resource-intensive. Local governments, especially smaller municipalities, may not have the in-house technical staff or financial reserves to quickly comply with new testing protocols, implement comprehensive tracking, or design mitigation infrastructure to lower PFAS concentrations below the designated thresholds of 25 or 50 parts per billion.

We speak from experience when we say that municipal utility staff and leadership have engaged in repeated, sometimes arduous conversations with state agencies, technical consultants, and our own residents. Many communities have felt the frustration of being held accountable for PFAS pollution that originates with

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

industrial sources outside of the municipality's direct control. Our efforts to collaborate with industries, conduct community outreach, and pursue innovative treatment solutions are genuine. However, the financial and technical burden has in many cases been shifted disproportionately to municipalities, entities that are often least responsible for the original introduction of these chemicals.

Despite these challenges, Maryland's municipalities have shown resilience, adaptability, and a willingness to go above and beyond regulatory baselines. The process of moving forward has been anything but easy, one marked by trials, retrials, and, yes, frustration with the slow pace of technological development and the mounting costs of compliance. Still, we continue to work proactively, because we share with the General Assembly a commitment to protect Maryland's land, water, and people.

Therefore, as strong supporters of SB 719, the Maryland Municipal League urges the committee to pair these requirements with robust, accessible funding assistance and technical support for municipalities. A commitment of this nature is not only essential for compliance, but for fairness and effectiveness. As SB 719 acknowledges, even the best-intentioned and most diligent municipal operators cannot achieve what is required without partnership and resources. Supporting our local governments in this transition will help ensure that the law's promise is met in practice: safeguarding public health, maintaining agricultural productivity, and upholding the environmental legacy we leave to future generations.

We thank you for your vision, diligence, and partnership on this important environmental priority, and urge a favorable report on SB 719, with amendments to provide critically needed funding and technical assistance to Maryland's municipalities.

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

Tyler Brice: Manager, Advocacy and Public Policy, [tylerb@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:tylerb@mdmunicipal.org)