



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

February 4th 2026

SB264

**Drinking Water - Regulation - Control and Prevention of Waterborne Disease Education,
Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **Senate Bill 264**. 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 264 strengthens Maryland's protection against waterborne illnesses—particularly Legionella—by establishing minimum disinfectant levels, requiring regular testing, improving monitoring in public water systems, and mandating clear communication when system disruptions occur. It also creates a process for investigating suspected cases of Legionnaires' disease to ensure timely public health responses and improved data collection.

Water is a necessity for every individual, and it is our shared responsibility to ensure that all Maryland residents have access to clean, safe water without the constant fear of waterborne disease. Providing reliable, uncontaminated drinking water is one of the most fundamental duties of public governance. When water systems fail, the consequences fall hardest on children, seniors, low-income families, and people with weakened immune systems—those least able to bear additional health or financial burdens. By implementing proactive monitoring, strengthening public-health safeguards, and improving transparency in our water systems, Maryland can prevent illness, reduce long-term healthcare costs, and reinforce public confidence in the essential infrastructure that supports daily life.

Catholic social teaching reminds us of the God-given dignity of every human person and our moral obligation to safeguard public health. Access to clean water is not a luxury; it is a basic human right—central to human life, community well-being, and the common good. Marylanders should not have to add water safety to the long list of everyday worries they already carry. Ensuring universal access to clean drinking water is a simple yet powerful way to promote peace of mind and protect the well-being of families across our state.

Supporting this bill affirms our moral duty to defend vulnerable populations and ensure that every Marylander has access to the life-giving resources God has entrusted to us. Clean water sustains life and safeguarding it sustains our commitment to justice.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **Senate Bill 264**.