



Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Montgomery County  
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**WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN STRONG SUPPORT  
BILL PG/MC 102-26 (HB 1230)  
Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Procurement Alterations**

Submitted to:  
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee  
Maryland General Assembly  
Annapolis, Maryland

Date: March 27, 2026

On behalf of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce Montgomery County (HCCMC), which represents hundreds of Hispanic-owned small and local businesses across Montgomery County and the broader Washington Suburban area, we submit this written testimony in strong support of PG/MC 102-26 (HB 1230). We are pleased to see that the bill passed the House with minimal changes and has now moved to the Senate. This legislation represents a thoughtful, forward-thinking modernization of WSSC Water’s procurement statute that will expand meaningful opportunities for our member businesses while strengthening Maryland’s economy.

We commend WSSC Water for its leadership in creating pathways for local, small, veteran-owned, and disabled veteran-owned businesses. Small and local businesses like those in our Chamber often face unnecessary administrative barriers just to register as vendors—an entry point that larger firms navigate with ease. HB 1230 directly addresses this by streamlining vendor registration through self-certification where appropriate, recognizing certifications from Prince George’s County, Montgomery County, and other public agencies, and eliminating duplicative paperwork—all while maintaining the highest standards of program integrity.

These practical changes open doors for qualified Hispanic-owned and other small businesses that have historically been shut out before they could even compete. The bill wisely introduces tiered preferences that extend beyond traditional small local businesses to include firms based in (or with 25% of employees residing in) Prince George’s and Montgomery Counties, with additional preferences for Maryland businesses outside the service area. It also modernizes the “Local Small Business Enterprise Program” into the broader Business Participation Program, ensuring small and local businesses retain the highest preference levels.

The economic stakes could not be higher. WSSC Water plans to invest \$4.8 billion over the next six years through its Capital Improvements Program—including \$715.5 million in FY26 alone. For every \$1 million spent, 15–18 jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) are created. Over the past five years, WSSC Water has already spent \$1.3 billion with Maryland businesses, nearly \$635 million of which stayed within its service district. By keeping these customer dollars circulating locally through streamlined access and local hiring priorities, HB 1230 will build wealth, create jobs, and drive economic growth right here in our communities.

We are particularly pleased that the bill authorizes regulations to promote local hiring and recruitment, apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, skills training, workforce development, and workforce residency reporting—measures that will directly benefit the residents and workers our Chamber serves. The legislation also thoughtfully provides preferences for veteran-owned and disabled veteran-owned businesses, aligning with state priorities. Importantly, HB 1230 does not amend, limit, or affect WSSC Water’s strong Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program, which has reached record participation levels (39% overall, with MBE prime contractor awards rising to 68% since FY2023). Instead, it complements these legacy programs to maximize opportunities for small, local, and diverse businesses.

This bill is a true win-win: it was developed with input from the very business community it will impact, strikes the right balance among all stakeholders, and ensures that WSSC Water’s massive investments continue to strengthen Maryland’s economy.



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HCCMC respectfully urges the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee to advance PG/MC 102-26 (HB 1230) without delay. We stand ready to provide any additional information or oral testimony if requested.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Vásquez', is positioned above the printed name.

**Mauricio Vásquez, Ph.D., PMP**

Executive Director

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