



ADDRESSING THE HEALTH OF DRINKING WATER

Protecting the Drinking Water Quality of Maryland's Mobile Home Residents

Senator Shaneka Henson

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SB0940 – Senate Hearing, March 4, 2026 – 1 p.m. EEE

HB1196 - House Hearing, March 4, 2026- 1 p.m. E&T

A 2024 Penn State Research Study¹ on mobile home communities reports that Maryland has more than 437 -- established and concentrated in the southern, mid, and northeast, and eastern shore regions. Residents include retirees, veterans, people with disabilities, immigrants, state and county employees, and families at the marginal or below average median income level – all in need of below market-rate housing. While they either own or rent their dwelling units, all are charged a separate fee to rent the lot as well as paying separately for their utilities by the park owners.

Threats to Residents Health – Owners of mobile home communities are predominantly private investors, who are also responsible for providing essential services such as water and wastewater disposal. Drinking water delivered to residents in mobile home units is produced primarily from wells and groundwater, supplied by small community treatment systems that are operated and managed by the park owner. Residents paying separate fees for water supplied to their homes – experience disruptions as well as receiving discolored and foul-smelling water from their faucets. They also receive additional and unexplained charges for this service. While regulated by the MD Department of the Environment, existing State laws governing the operations of private community water systems do not protect residents drinking water from the issues associated with elevated levels of iron, bacteria, decolorization and sediment.



What the Legislation Requires!

- Updating Maryland's regulations authorizing the Department of the Environment (MDE) to enforce a part of the secondary drinking water regulations that does not exist.
- Prioritizing a water testing program for mobile home communities experiencing ongoing issues.
- Enforcing corrective actions to address drinking water quality.

Statewide and National Legislation - Maryland is not alone in taking action to protect residents ability to live in affordable mobile home communities and address the water quality issues they experience. Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, Oregon, Massachusetts, Washington, and Rhode Island have already adopted regulations to preserve these essential affordable communities and updated the enforcement of safe drinking water regulations to ensure that the water infrastructure is maintained, and residents receive quality water. Risks facing residents in these affordable communities—non-ownership of land, investor-controlled rent and service fees, and deteriorating infrastructure—continue to threaten the long-term viability of one of the state's most significant sources of affordable housing.

¹ *Protections of (Im)mobile homeowners from the consequences of (Im)mobile home park closures – Kenneth Barr, Attorney/Urban Planner – Penn State Law Review-Article 779 [Vol.128.3]*