



Alliance to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease

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Testimony before the Maryland Senate Education, Energy and the Environment Committee

In Support of Senate Bill 264, sponsored by Senator Ben Brooks

February 10, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of Senate Bill 264. I would like to thank Senator Ben Brooks for sponsoring this waterborne disease prevention act, which will save many lives in Maryland when enacted.

My name is Daryn Cline, a Founding Board Member of the Alliance to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease and its Director of Technology and Science and a Maryland resident. The Alliance has been a beacon of hope and a voice for many who have been impacted by Legionnaire's disease.

A significant portion of Maryland's population fall into groups with elevated risk for legionella infections. Those at risk include smokers, the elderly, those with asthma, chronic lung disease or suppressed immune systems, while children and healthy people may also be at risk.

In 2022, 10% of Maryland adults were smokers, a major risk factor for Legionnaires' disease due to impaired lungs and immune function. Roughly 30% of Marylanders are over the age of 55, a population with significantly higher hospitalization and fatality rates. These comorbidities result in Legionella posing a disproportionate and ongoing risk to Maryland residents.

Surprisingly, a vast majority of Legionnaires' disease cases are individual and sporadic and occur in the home. These cases seldom get visibility and are rarely investigated.

Senate Bill 264 addresses these sporadic cases for the most vulnerable population in their homes by requiring a minimum level of water disinfectant that will reduce legionella in their water supply and includes notifications of upset conditions which can release legionella into the distribution system.

Quite often we hear from water utilities that it's a "Building Issue" redirecting the legionella problem to building owners and operators, who try to address the legionella in their water with a water management plan.

But what about the individual in their home? They cannot afford a water management plan to help them. They rely on pathogen free water coming into their home from the public water supply. We are highly concerned about home-based exposure and the fact that susceptible individuals spend most of their time there.

The bill also provides more investigative power for these individual cases, so we know where they were infected, and a proper remediation plan can be implemented to prevent others from becoming sick.

I concur with Dr. Cheung's testimony in support of Senate Bill 264, and its comprehensive requirements that address the root cause of most Legionnaires' disease cases- including disinfecting for legionella in the water supply system, early warnings of upset conditions to consumers, increased investigations, building water management plans based on national standard ASHRAE 188, along with actions to take in the home to prevent exposure.

Given the fact that *legionella* exists in source water and the public water distribution system, we must properly manage, treat and monitor public water before *legionella* enters our homes and public places.

In summary, the Alliance is very supportive of Senate Bill 264, it takes a root-cause approach to prevent Legionnaires' disease and is modeled after effective policies that have been put in place in other states like recently in New Jersey, which you will hear about later in our testimony, as well as in Illinois and Louisiana.

Thank you.