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March 27, 2026

The Honorable Brian J. Feldman
Chair, Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee
Miller Senate Office Building, 2 West Wing
11 Bladen Street
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Education, Energy & the Environment Committee,

WSSC Water respectfully submits this statement in strong support of HB 1230 – Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Procurement Alterations. This legislation provides targeted administrative updates that modernize vendor registration, strengthen participation pathways for local and small businesses, and help ensure Maryland businesses are positioned to compete for the billions of dollars invested in water infrastructure across our region.

The legislation does not alter or replace the Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) Program. The MBE Program continues to operate in accordance with Maryland law governing minority business participation. This legislation instead complements existing participation programs by expanding additional pathways for businesses competing for WSSC Water contracts.

As an anchor institution, WSSC Water provides essential water and wastewater services to nearly 2 million residents in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties and supports approximately \$114.9 billion in regional economic output. Over the past five years, WSSC Water spent \$1.3 billion with Maryland businesses, including nearly \$635 million within our service district.

Over the next six years, WSSC Water will invest \$4.8 billion through our Capital Improvements Program. Economic impact analysis shows that every \$1 million invested in water infrastructure supports approximately 15-18 jobs across the regional economy. HB 1230 helps ensure that Maryland businesses and Maryland workers are positioned to participate in these investments. This represents real economic impact – Maryland businesses securing contracting opportunities and Maryland workers helping build the infrastructure that supports our communities.

WSSC Water is committed to advancing a vision of sustained and transformative change. This legislation is a practical and essential part of that effort. It modernizes our business participation framework and allows us to better support the ecosystem of small and local businesses that help

operate, maintain, and enhance nearly 12,000 miles of critical infrastructure. These updates help ensure that customer dollars invested in our water systems continue circulating within Maryland's economy, supporting businesses, workers, and communities throughout our region.

WSSC Water worked closely with vendors and industry stakeholders during the development of this legislation. Input was gathered through outreach events, vendor engagement sessions, and ongoing discussions with businesses that regularly participate in WSSC Water contracting opportunities. Based on this engagement and feedback from elected officials and stakeholders, several modifications were made to the bill as originally introduced.

As currently amended, the legislation advances the following:

1. **Clarifies the responsibilities of the Office of Supplier Diversity and Inclusion (OSDI)** and authorizes WSSC Water to update the Office's name through the public regulatory process, if necessary, to remain legally durable as business and economic development programs evolve.
2. **Modernizes vendor registration** by allowing WSSC Water to recognize certifications from other public agencies. For example, if a business is certified as small or local by Prince George's County, Montgomery County, or another public entity, WSSC Water may accept that certification—removing duplicative administrative steps while maintaining program standards.
3. **Clarifies OSDI's role in administering business participation programs and monitoring compliance**, ensuring statutory language accurately reflects current operational responsibilities.
4. **Updates the Small Local Business Enterprise (SLBE) framework** to expand opportunities for local, small, veteran-owned, and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses using preference tools authorized in this bill. The amendments maintain WSSC Water's intent to continue providing the strongest preference for small and local businesses.
5. **Authorizes regulations supporting workforce engagement and local economic benefit** within WSSC Water's service district, including standards for contractor good faith efforts related to local hiring, workforce training initiatives, and reporting on workforce residency and local economic activity.

Collectively, these updates respond directly to the needs consistently identified by vendors through our engagement efforts:

- clearer procurement processes
- fewer duplicative administrative steps; and
- a framework that keeps pace with the scale of infrastructure investment ahead

When operationalized, these improvements will strengthen accessibility to compete for procurement opportunities, improve processing efficiency, and support the continued development of capable Maryland firms and local workers. Without these targeted statutory updates, current language may unintentionally limit the ability of capable Maryland businesses to compete for larger infrastructure

Chair Feldman and Members of the Senate Committee

March 27, 2026

Page 3

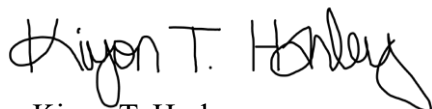
projects as contract values continue to increase. HB 1230 helps ensure that firms ready to perform this work are not excluded from opportunities due to outdated administrative frameworks.

Water infrastructure is often viewed only through the lens of pipes, pumping stations, and treatment facilities. In reality, it is also the foundation of public health, community stability, and economic vitality. HB 1230 strengthens the administrative framework that enables Maryland businesses to meaningfully support WSSC Water's mission of delivering safe, reliable, and sustainable water and wastewater services while helping ensure that infrastructure investments generate meaningful economic opportunity within our communities.

When WSSC Water invests billions of dollars in critical infrastructure, Maryland businesses and Maryland workers should have every opportunity to compete for and help deliver that work. HB 1230 strengthens the framework necessary to support that outcome while preserving existing participation programs.

For these reasons, WSSC Water respectfully requests a favorable report on HB 1230. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kiyon T. Harley

Director

Office of Supplier Diversity & Inclusion