



**The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

House Bill 1196

Environment - Water Quality Testing - Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels Action Plan

Position: Support
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Date: March 31, 2026
From: Alex Butler, Deputy Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 1196.

Bill Summary

House Bill 1196 as amended requires MDE to develop an action plan on creating enforceable Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels (SMCLs) for community and nontransient noncommunity public water systems. The action plan would include: (1) an analysis of existing secondary contaminants in those public water systems; (2) a draft approach for enforcing SMCLs; (3) a summary of how other states regulate SMCLs; (4) a decision-matrix on the feasibility, benefits, and challenges of MDE creating enforceable SMCLs; (5) an evaluation of potential costs borne by covered public water systems; and (6) a projected time frame for implementing enforceable SMCLs. The bill also requires MDE to consult with certain stakeholders. MDE's Water Supply Program can develop the action plan with existing resources.

Position Rationale

SMCLs include substances such as iron or sulfur that do not pose a direct public health or environmental threat but can cause water odor, taste, or discoloration issues. HB 1196, as amended, empowers MDE to research how Maryland could join other states already enforcing SMCLs. This approach will ensure any proposed enforceable standards are grounded in a thorough analysis of feasibility, costs, and cross-state best practices. Through the action plan, MDE can work to identify the best approach to address SMCLs.

Accordingly, MDE respectfully requests the Committee give HB 1196 a **FAVORABLE** report.