

HB1196Testimony.pdf.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeffrie Long

Position: FAV

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Legislative District 27B
Calvert and Prince George's Counties

Environment and Transportation
Committee

Vice Chair
Southern Maryland Delegation

March 31st, 2026



The Maryland House of Delegates
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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and Environment Committee.

HB1196 – Environment – Mobile Home Parks – Water Quality Testing – Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels Action Plan
Favorable

Thank you for the opportunity to present HB1196 – the cross file to SB940. As previously noted, is an updated version created through collaboration between the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), affected residents, and environmental advocates. This new version, which has a more neutral financial impact, is one that I strongly urge you to give it a favorable report together with SB940.

Your vote is needed as this bill addresses a serious problem to public health: MDE does not currently have the full authority it needs to ensure safe, clean drinking water for certain Maryland residents. Previous testimony provided you with examples from mobile home residents – which are being faced throughout Maryland where a lack of enforcement power has left residents with unsafe water.

In Maryland’s mobile home parks, drinking water primarily comes from wells and groundwater systems owned and operated by private community owners. These small systems often have long standing issues. Residents—who pay separate fees for water—have had their water service disrupted and have received discolored, foul smelling water for years. Many have experienced health problems as a result.

To understand the issue, it helps to know how drinking water laws work. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sets national rules for keeping drinking water safe for homes, businesses, and communities. States, including Maryland, are then given the authority to enforce these rules through the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Almost every state, U.S. territory, and the Navajo Nation has what’s called “primacy,” meaning they are responsible for enforcing these federal drinking water rules. These rules include both health related standards and some that deal with aesthetic issues like taste, color, and odor.

However, there is a category of standards called National Secondary Drinking Water Regulations. These deal with things like smell, appearance, and taste. The EPA sets guidelines

for these issues, but they are not enforceable at the federal level. States can choose to make them enforceable—but Maryland has not done so – not yet.

That is the problem HB1196 and SB0940 aims to fix. Maryland needs to join the nearly 20 other states already enforce these secondary regulations -- so MDE can address serious water quality issues, especially in small communities where problems are most common.

This legislation, which will begin the process of giving MDE the authority it needs requires the state to create an action plan that includes: A review of how other states enforce secondary drinking water standards Identification of Maryland communities with severe taste, odor, or discoloration problems so they can receive priority testing A decision-making guide showing the benefits and challenges of fully adopting these standards in the future.

For all these reasons, I urge you to give HB1196 an immediate favorable vote.

Very Truly Yours,

Jeffrie E. Long Jr.

Delegate Jeffrie E. Long Jr.

MDE HB 1196 SUP - EEE.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: FAV



**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.

HB 1196 - CBF - FAV - EEE.pdf

Uploaded by: Matt Stegman

Position: FAV



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

House Bill 1196 Environment - Water Quality Testing - Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels Action Plan

Date: March 31, 2026

To: Education, Energy, & the Environment Committee

Position: FAVORABLE w/ AMENDMENT

From: Matt Stegman,
MD Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS House Bill 1196**, which takes an important step toward addressing a longstanding gap in Maryland's water quality framework: the lack of a clear, enforceable approach to secondary maximum contaminant levels (SMCLs) in drinking water systems.

While SMCLs are not currently enforceable, the conditions they address – discoloration, odor, and taste – are not trivial. For many Maryland residents, particularly those served by small or privately operated systems such as mobile home communities, these issues are persistent and undermine confidence in the safety and reliability of their drinking water. HB1196 appropriately recognizes that these concerns warrant a more systematic and transparent response.

CBF is supportive of the requirement that the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) develop a statewide action plan. The elements required under the bill – data collection on secondary contaminants, evaluation of enforcement approaches, comparison to other states, cost and feasibility analysis, and a defined implementation timeline – reflect the type of comprehensive, science-based planning that is necessary to move from recognition of a problem to meaningful solutions.

CBF's work across the Chesapeake Bay watershed has consistently demonstrated that upstream water quality issues – whether in wastewater systems, stormwater management, or drinking water infrastructure – have downstream consequences for both public health and environmental integrity.

We also strongly support the bill's emphasis on stakeholder engagement, particularly the inclusion of residents served by affected systems and community-based organizations. CBF's experience working with communities across Maryland underscores the importance of incorporating lived experience into regulatory design. Residents who routinely encounter discolored, foul-smelling, or bad-tasting water bring critical insight into both the scope of the problem and the urgency of addressing it.

As MDE develops this action plan, CBF encourages a focus on:

- Ensuring that data collection and reporting are publicly accessible and easy to understand;

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- Evaluating enforcement approaches that are practical and meaningful, particularly for smaller systems; and
- Identifying pathways to implementation that prioritize equity and timely improvements, rather than indefinite study.

HB1196 does not immediately mandate enforcement of SMCLs, but it lays the groundwork for informed decision making and future action. That is a necessary and constructive step forward.

CBF requests the committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 1196.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.

Maryland Catholic Conference_FAVHB1196_ SENATE CRO

Uploaded by: Michelle Zelaya

Position: FAV



MARYLAND
CATHOLIC
CONFERENCE

March 31ST 2026

HB1196

**Environment - Mobile Home Parks - Water Quality Testing
Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
Position: Favorable**

The Maryland Catholic Conference offers this testimony in support of **House Bill 1196**. The Maryland Catholic Conference is the public policy representative of the three (arch)dioceses serving Maryland, which together encompass over one million Marylanders. Statewide, their parishes, schools, hospitals and numerous charities combine to form our state's second largest social service provider network, behind only our state government.

House Bill 1196 ensures that residents of mobile home parks—many of whom are low-income, elderly, or part of marginalized communities—have reliable access to clean, safe water. By requiring the Department of the Environment to create a statewide water quality testing program, conducting regular testing by set deadlines, and ensure that park owners remediate any identified issues, the bill directly addresses longstanding gaps in oversight and environmental health protections. It ensures that water quality in mobile home communities is not overlooked, neglected, or subject to inconsistent local practices.

Clean water is a foundational public health necessity, and this bill brings essential protection to populations who have historically faced higher risks of contamination. When families know their water is safe, they experience better health outcomes, reduced rates of illness, and improved quality of life. This also lifts financial burdens associated with medical treatment and bottled water reliance. At a broader level, guaranteeing water safety promotes environmental equity, strengthens community trust in public institutions, and helps prevent future crises that are far more costly to address once contamination has spread. The legislation ensures that all Marylanders—regardless of housing status—are treated with dignity and provided with the same environmental protection as any other household.

Access to clean water is not merely a policy preference—it is a moral obligation rooted in the belief that every person is created in the image of God and deserves conditions that promote health and human flourishing. The bill also upholds the principles of the common good and solidarity, reminding us that environmental safety must not depend on one's income or neighborhood. By passing this legislation, Maryland moves closer to a society that protects the vulnerable, safeguards creation, and ensures fair and just treatment for all families.

For these reasons, the Maryland Catholic Conference urges a favorable report on **House Bill 1196**.

Anne Arundel County _FAV_HB1196 Senate Crossover.p

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Position: FAV



March 31, 2026

House Bill 1196
Environment - Water Quality Testing - Secondary Maximum Contaminant
Levels Action Plan

Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee

Position: FAVORABLE

Anne Arundel County **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1196 – Environment - Water Quality Testing - Secondary Maximum Contaminant Levels Action Plan. This Bill requires the Department of Environment to develop a statewide action plan for secondary maximum contaminant levels enforcement that will address critical water quality issues across the state, especially those present in mobile home communities.

There are more than 400 mobile home communities across Maryland with significant concentrations in the northeast, the Eastern Shore, and southern Maryland, such as Lothian in Anne Arundel County. These mobile home communities provide unique affordable housing solutions to residents that include retirees, veterans, people with disabilities, immigrants, state and county employees, and families with low or moderate incomes. Despite the name “mobile homes”, residents live in manufactured units that serve as their permanent housing, which they must rent the land beneath them and pay separately for utilities and fees set by private owners. However, private investors in mobile home communities have been negligent in maintaining essential infrastructure. Due to the nature of current mobile home regulations that enable predatory practices, many residents fear retaliation and continue to face long-standing problems of recurring water shutoffs, foul or discolored water, and unexplained fees.

It is critical that we ensure all residents have access to safe, clean, drinking water. This Bill as amended authorizes the Department of Environment to enforce secondary drinking water regulations and help protect our already financially vulnerable residents. For those reasons, Anne Arundel County respectfully requests a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 1196.