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February 27, 2026

Position: SUPPORT HB1164 - Water Companies, Sewage Disposal Companies, and Water and Sewage Disposal Companies – Rate Consolidation and Limited-Income Mechanisms

Dear Members of the Maryland General Assembly,

On behalf of the Allegany County Commissioners, I write to express our county's support for HB 1164 – Water Companies, Sewage Disposal Companies, and Water and Sewage Disposal Companies – Rate Consolidation and Limited-Income Mechanisms.

Residents in the Bel Air, Highland Estates, Pinto, and Glen Oaks water systems are currently experiencing exceptionally high water and sewer rates under the ownership of Maryland Water Service. These systems are in the process of being sold to American Water Service.

At the request of American Water Service, we are expressing our support for this legislation. We have been advised that the rate consolidation mechanisms contemplated in HB 1164 would allow for meaningful rate relief for residents in these systems. While we do not have the ability to independently verify these projections, we are committed to pursuing any viable option that could provide relief to our citizens. To the extent that the Environment & Transportation Committee are able to verify the voracity of the claim that rate blending will provide meaningful rate relief for the citizens of Allegany County, we wish to support House Bill 1164.

Currently, residents within these districts are paying as much as 65% more for water and sewer services than residents outside of these systems. These rate disparities are unsustainable and place a significant financial burden on families in our community. Our constituents are struggling, and we are seeking every reasonable avenue to address this inequity.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge favorable consideration of HB 1164.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Bennett", is written over a light blue circular stamp.

Jason Bennett, CPA
County Administrator
Allegany County Government

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