



Alliance to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease

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Testimony before the Maryland House Committee on Environment and Transportation

In Support of House Bill 204, sponsored by Delegate Allen

February 4, 2026

Chair, Vice Chair, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 204. I would also like to thank Delegate Nick Allen for sponsoring this waterborne disease prevention act, which ultimately will save many Marylanders.

My name is Daryn Cline, a Founding Board Member of the Alliance to Prevent Legionnaires' Disease and its Director of Technology and Science. The Alliance has been a beacon of hope and a voice for many who have been impacted by Legionnaire's disease. They do not want to see Legionnaire's affect another family.

For the last 10 years the Alliance has educated the public on the true source of legionella and the most effective methods of minimizing and reducing exposure to it-using a source to tap approach. Recently, Senate Bill 2188 passed in New Jersey, a groundbreaking bill that has set the bar for a national legislative "source to tap" model for Legionnaires' disease prevention and is based on addressing legionella in the public water supply, in the distribution system, and in buildings and homes. House Bill 204 is modeled after this successful legislation.

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

House Bill 204 addresses these sporadic cases for the most vulnerable population in their homes by requiring a level of water disinfectant that will minimize legionella in their water supply, and it recommends specific actions to address it, like increasing their water heaters to 130F and flushing hose connections and cleaning faucet aerators among other recommendations.

Quite often we hear from water utilities that it's a "Building Issue" redirecting the legionella problem to building owners and operators, who can try to address the water they receive which contains legionella bacteria 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 some of the most susceptible individuals are those who are often homebound.

The bill also provides more investigative power for these individual cases, so they know where they were infected, and a proper remediation plan can be implemented.

During the last decade, I have had the opportunity to meet those affected by sporadic cases of Legionnaires' disease in New York, New Jersey and Minnesota, including the wife of a young husband, a mother of a 4-year-old girl, the sister of a healthy Bronx school teacher, and a miraculous survivor. The stories break your heart, especially when you know that it could have been prevented.

Today you will hear testimony from Gwen Hanlon from New Jersey, who lost her husband, a father of two, to Legionnaires' disease, they are still searching for answers. When individual cases occur, the traumatic and sometimes tragic results are often known only by close friends and families. There's no media, no political pressure – just tragedy.

I concur with Dr. Cheung's testimony in support of House Bill 204 with comprehensive requirements that address the root cause of most Legionnaires' disease cases- disinfecting for legionella in the water supply system, early warnings of upset conditions to consumers, building water management plans consistent with the leading national standard ASHRAE 188, along with actions to take in the home to prevent exposure.

Given the fact that *legionella* exists in the source water and public water distribution system, we must properly manage, treat and monitor water in the public distribution system before these pathogens they have already entered our homes and public places, "seeded" from the public water system.

In sum, we are very supportive of House Bill 204, it takes a root-cause approach to preventing Legionnaires' disease, modeled after effective policies that have been put in place in other states like New Jersey, Illinois and Louisiana.

Thank you.