

## **Delegate Howard –Testimony HB1196**

This bill originated as a solution to drinking water problems at mobile home parks in South Anne Arundel County. This is my District.

Owners of these mobile home parks are not residents in these parks –they are land investors who charge mobile home owners to rent the land to park their home on.

Just like in any other home, these residents must have access to a water supply. However, these mobile home park owners control the water supply within their parks, and they are basically unregulated. There are no standards for the quality of the water, nor how much the park owners may charge the home owner or renter for supplying their water.

And in my District, these residents, mostly low-income, have been living with foul-smelling, discolored water running out of taps –to drink ...to cook their food with ...to bathe in. And when I say “discolored”, I mean “black” water coming out of taps.

To make matters worse, the park owners charge residents for this water that neither you, nor I, would want to bathe in or cook with, or much less drink – even when the residents bring in their own water, so as not to use the park water. They are charged exorbitant costs for water that they may never even consume.

What surprised me was that this water has been tested by MDE and was found to be within acceptable standards. And you, like I did at first, may wonder –how can this be.

This is because MDE only regulates and enforces what is known as “primary” drinking water standards –basically, they test for only those contaminants that might kill you if you drink them. The drinking water problems we are talking about here are known as “secondary” contaminants under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act –they are not likely to cause immediate death, but aside from causing long term and indirect health problems, the water is just simply unpalatable –and no one deserves that –least of all, MY constituents.

In discussions with MDE, we found that they are not authorized to regulate or enforce “secondary” drinking water standards. However, there are at least 20 states across the country that DO regulate and enforce these standards to ensure that their residents have clean, healthy drinking water flowing out of their taps.

This bill authorizes MDE to conduct an analysis of the problem, look at what other states are doing, and to create an Action Plan over the next year for how Maryland can move forward with ensuring that our residents are entitled to clean drinking water –no matter where they live.

Like these other states, Maryland must make certain that our residents are not receiving black, foul-smelling, murky water when they turn on the faucet. Marylanders of any income level deserve clean drinking water, and our state agencies and elected officials must be able to make that guarantee to our constituents.