

# Baltimore Regional Water Governance Model Workgroup

## Legislation Review & Workgroup Mission

### Laws of Maryland Chapter 503 HB1509 /SB1174

#### Background:

A prior task force, established by [HB843](#) in Spring of 2023, evaluated the water and wastewater operations of Baltimore City and Baltimore County. A report was produced offering several options for governing models to address short- and long-term issues. The task force believed “Option E” – a Special District/Authority, could address many of the long-term regional concerns cited throughout the study, but did not have the time to fully investigate. This legislation and current workgroup’s mission is the result of the recommendation to explore the possibility and viability of a regional governing authority.

#### Purpose:

The workgroup is established, by [HB1509](#), to study the regional water governance model approach (herein “RWGM”) for the management, protection, and operation of water and wastewater in the Baltimore region. The workgroup will review the Baltimore Regional Water Governance Task Force [report of 2023](#), in particular Option E – a Special District/Authority, with key areas to be evaluated for final recommendations and reporting.

#### Goals:

There were eight areas of improvement, established as a baseline, to be addressed as part of the initial study and a future optimal operating regional authority:

- Management
- Operations
- Employee recruitment
- Retention and training
- Billing and collections
- Planning for capital improvements
- Emergency management
- Rate stability for customers

After a series of public sessions with community engagement, coupled with brief reviews of governance models, six additional areas of consideration were identified to be evaluated under this legislation’s specific regional governance model focus:

- Impacts to vulnerable residents and potential programs to help them manage through the transition

- A financial transition plan and the underlying fiscal impacts to the participating jurisdictions, benefit commitments, and standing debt obligations
- Hiring new employees and transitioning existing employees to a new regional authority
- Potential needed changes to statutes, regulatory codes, and municipal charters
- Administrative and operational changes, and determining the inclusion or exclusion of stormwater management
- The establishment of a consumer rate board to ensure fairness and balancing rates between the City and County

### Resources:

The legislation provisioned funds for the workgroup to hire independent consultants to facilitate the above requirements including:

- Outside counsel to assist with the analysis of issues related to regional governance
- Experts in equity analysis

### Limitations:

The task force may *not* consider or make recommendations related to a privately operated RWGM.

### Members:

Bill Henry, Baltimore City Comptroller

Antoinette Ryan Johnson, President, City Union of Baltimore (CUB)

Patrick Moran, President, AFSCME Council 3

Kishia L. Powell, General Manager/CEO, Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission (WSSC)  
Water

Kelly Baxter, Water/Wastewater Treatment Practice Leader, Mott MacDonald

Matthew Garbark, Director, Baltimore City Department of Public Works

Matthew Carpenter, Deputy Director, Baltimore County Office of Budget & Finance

Michael Swygert, Chief – Metropolitan District Financing and Petitions, Baltimore County  
Department of Public Works and Transportation

Mary Washington, Senator District 43

Dana Stein, Delegate District 11B, Vice-Chair, Environment and Transportation Committee

Beth O’Conner, Chief – Engineering, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works

Adam Ortiz, Deputy Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment

Karen Dettmer, Director of Water Resources US, Ramboll

### Final Report Due:

June 20, 2027 with target decision date of October 20, 2026