



House Bill 11

Private Well Safety Act of 2023

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Environment and Transportation
Committee

Date: February 1, 2023

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 11. This bill would provide counties with additional resources through the Private Well Safety Program and Fund, to be Administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment. Provided appropriations are made to the fund, this would be a great opportunity for counties and eligible households to access the funds necessary to make vital repairs and upgrades to failing wells.

Unresolved well problems can lead to dangerous circumstances for residents relying on this water source. The potential for water contamination is very high if a well is left un-serviced or in a failing state. The costs of inspecting and repairing a failing well or installing, when necessary, a new well pose a substantial burden on a homeowner but may be essential to ensuring the safety and potability of the water servicing the household. The costs of repair or replacement of a failing well should not serve as a deterrent to proper testing, and HB 11 targets that conundrum.

This bill establishes a program that would allow the county to access funding to inspect, repair, and potentially upgrade private wells for households that fall below a certain income level. This would help counties ensure the safety of water for individuals and families that do not have the means to do so themselves.

The eligibility requirements for counties to qualify for the funding are also quite reasonable. Additionally, in counties that waive their eligibility, the funding outlined in this bill is flexible enough to go directly to an eligible household in need, even if their county does not engage to manage its own program.

Overall, this bill helps alleviate a financial barrier for individuals and households to ensure the safety of their drinking water while also enabling the county to assist with this important effort, empowering local governments to do more in providing a safe and healthy environment for residents. For this reason, MACo **SUPPORTS** HB 11 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.