

HOUSE BILL 1195

L5

5lr0884

By: **Montgomery County Delegation and Prince George's County Delegation**

Introduced and read first time: February 6, 2025

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation

Committee Report: Favorable with amendments

House action: Adopted

Read second time: March 5, 2025

CHAPTER _____

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – Membership, ~~Transparency~~**
3 **Reporting, Billing, and Planning**
4 **(WSSC ~~Transparency and Reform~~ Planning and Reporting Act of 2025)**

5 **MC/PG 105–25**

6 FOR the purpose of requiring one of the commissioners from Montgomery County on the
7 Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to be the Director of the Montgomery
8 County Department of Environmental Protection or the Director's designee;
9 ~~requiring the Commission to develop certain long-range planning scenarios on a~~
10 ~~periodic basis; requiring the Commission to include certain information related to~~
11 ~~the Commission on the Commission's searchable website; prohibiting the~~
12 ~~Commission from limiting how frequently certain customers may receive a certain~~
13 ~~billing adjustment; altering the authorized billing frequency for certain charges;~~
14 ~~requiring the Commission to appoint a representative to a certain coordinating~~
15 ~~committee; requiring the Office of Program Evaluation and Government~~
16 ~~Accountability in the Department of Legislative Services to conduct a certain review~~
17 ~~of the efficiency and sustainability of the Commission's operations~~ requiring the
18 Commission to submit a certain long-range comprehensive financial plan in a
19 certain manner; requiring the Commission to publish and include certain
20 information on its website; requiring the budget authorization for the Office of the
21 Inspector General in the Commission to be approved independently and without the
22 involvement of Commission staff; requiring the Office to undergo a certain external,
23 independent peer review of the Office's quality control system with a certain
24 frequency; requiring the Commission to report in a certain manner certain

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.

Underlining indicates amendments to bill.

~~Strike out~~ indicates matter stricken from the bill by amendment or deleted from the law by amendment.



information relating to bills exceeding certain limits for high bill adjustments; requiring the Commission to report to the General Assembly on certain procedural changes to enhance the customer engagement process for certain customers and to include information relating to the changes in customer notification letters; requiring the Commission to work with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation and, as necessary, other stakeholders to assess certain ad valorem taxes; requiring the Commission to hire a consultant to conduct, in consultation with the Department of Legislative Services, a certain independent evaluation; requiring the Office to conduct a certain review of the efficiency and sustainability of the operations of the Commission and the Department of Legislative Services to conduct a review of the review; and generally relating to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Public Utilities

Section 17–102, 17–107, 17–401, ~~and 25–504(a) and (b)~~ 17–607, and 25–504(b)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

BY adding to

Article – Public Utilities

Section 17–202.1 ~~and 28–102~~, 17–610, and 25–504(h)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2020 Replacement Volume and 2024 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,

That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Public Utilities

17–102.

(a) The Commission consists of:

(1) three commissioners from Prince George’s County, appointed by the County Executive subject to the confirmation of the County Council; and

(2) three commissioners from Montgomery County, **OF WHOM:**

(I) TWO ARE appointed by the County Executive subject to the confirmation of the County Council; **AND**

(II) ONE IS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OR THE DIRECTOR’S DESIGNEE.

(b) (1) Each commissioner from Prince George’s County shall be a resident of the sanitary district.

(2) (i) ~~Each~~ EXCEPT FOR THE COMMISSIONER WHO ALSO SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OR IS THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE, EACH commissioner from Montgomery County shall be a registered voter of Montgomery County.

(ii) Each commissioner from Prince George's County shall be a registered voter of Prince George's County.

(c) (1) [An] EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (A)(2)(II) OF THIS SECTION, AN individual may not be appointed or continue in office as a commissioner if the individual holds any other position of profit or trust under the Constitution or laws of the State or any political subdivision of the State.

(2) Not more than two commissioners from Montgomery County may be of the same political party.

(d) (1) THIS SUBSECTION DOES NOT APPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER WHO ALSO SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OR THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE.

(2) The term of a commissioner is 4 years and begins on June 1 of the year of appointment.

~~(2)~~ (3) The terms of commissioners are staggered as required by the terms provided for commissioners on July 1, 1982.

~~(3)~~ (4) At the end of a term, a commissioner continues to serve until a successor is appointed and takes the oath of office.

~~(4)~~ (5) A commissioner who is appointed after a term has begun serves only for the rest of the term and until a successor is appointed and takes the oath of office.

~~(5)~~ (E) A vacancy on the Commission does not impair the right of the remaining commissioners to exercise all the powers of the Commission.

(F) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION WHO ALSO SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION, OR IS THE DIRECTOR'S DESIGNEE:

(1) SERVES AS A VOTING MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION; AND

(2) MAY SERVE AS THE CHAIR OR VICE CHAIR OF THE COMMISSION.

(a) (1) ~~[The]~~ **EXCEPT AS PROVIDED IN SUBSECTION (D) OF THIS SECTION,**
THE members of the Commission are entitled to the following annual salaries:

- (i) chair \$13,500;
- (ii) vice chair \$13,000; and
- (iii) commissioners \$13,000.

(2) The salary shall be paid every 2 weeks.

(b) While in office, commissioners may participate in any Commission program of group health, life, and disability insurance to the same extent and under the same terms as Commission staff.

(c) The Commission may employ a staff in accordance with the Commission's budget.

(D) A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION WHO ALSO SERVES AS THE DIRECTOR OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION FOR DUTIES PERFORMED AS A MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION.

17-202.1.

~~(A) FOR FISCAL YEAR 2026 AND EVERY 5 FISCAL YEARS THEREAFTER, THE COMMISSION SHALL DEVELOP LONG RANGE PLANNING SCENARIOS FOR ITS OPERATING AND CAPITAL BUDGETS AND DEBT SERVICE.~~

~~(B) THE SCENARIOS SHALL INCLUDE:~~

~~(1) PROJECTIONS THAT DO NOT INCLUDE THE AD VALOREM TAX AUTHORIZED UNDER § 22-112 OF THIS ARTICLE;~~

~~(2) PROJECTIONS THAT INCLUDE A RANGE OF AD VALOREM TAXES;~~
~~AND~~

~~(3) SUBJECT TO SUBSECTION (C)(2) OF THIS SECTION, STRESS TESTING THE IMPACT OF A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT MAY AFFECT THE COMMISSION AND ITS FINANCIAL SOLVENCY, INCLUDING CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT RATES, INTEREST RATES, AND WATER USAGE.~~

~~(C) (1) THE COMMISSION MAY CONSULT WITH INDEPENDENT EXPERTS IN DEVELOPING LONG RANGE PLANNING SCENARIOS UNDER THIS SECTION.~~

~~(2) STRESS TESTING DONE UNDER SUBSECTION (B)(3) OF THIS SECTION SHALL BE BASED ON INDUSTRY STANDARDS.~~

(A) (1) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2025, THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THE COUNTY COUNCILS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

(I) A LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN THAT:

1. IS DEVELOPED BY THE COMMISSION IN CONJUNCTION WITH AN INDEPENDENT FINANCIAL ADVISOR; AND

2. MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION; AND

(II) ANY UPDATED COMMISSION POLICIES RELATING TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

(2) ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2026, AND EVERY 5 YEARS THEREAFTER, THE COMMISSION SHALL SUBMIT TO THE COUNTY COUNCILS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY:

(I) AN UPDATED VERSION OF THE LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN; AND

(II) ANY UPDATED COMMISSION POLICIES RELATING TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT.

(B) A LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN SHALL:

(1) INCLUDE STRESS TESTING BASED ON INDUSTRY STANDARDS; AND

(2) TEST THE IMPACT OF A WIDE RANGE OF ECONOMIC CONDITIONS THAT MAY AFFECT THE COMMISSION AND ITS FINANCIAL SOLVENCY, INCLUDING CHANGES IN EMPLOYMENT RATES, INTEREST RATES, AND WATER USAGE.

(C) THE COMMISSION SHALL PUBLISH THE LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE ESTABLISHED UNDER § 17-401 OF THIS TITLE.

17-401.

(a) (1) In this section the following words have the meanings indicated.

(2) (i) “Payee” means a person that receives from the Commission an aggregate payment of \$25,000 in a single fiscal year.

(ii) “Payee” does not include:

1. a Commission employee with respect to the employee’s compensation; or

2. a Commission retiree with respect to the retiree’s retirement allowance.

(3) “Searchable website” means a website created in accordance with this section that displays and searches payment data of the Commission.

(b) The Commission shall:

(1) publish annually in at least one newspaper in Montgomery County and one newspaper in Prince George’s County a copy of the current financial statement of the Commission;

(2) employ a certified public accountant licensed to practice in the State to audit the books and accounts of the Commission;

(3) keep available for public inspection during business hours at its principal office the annual audit and current financial statement; and

(4) file annually with the county executives and county councils of Montgomery County and Prince George’s County, and the Montgomery County and Prince George’s County Senate and House delegations to the Maryland General Assembly a certified copy of the annual audit and current financial statement.

(c) On or before July 1, 2020, the Commission shall develop and operate a single searchable website accessible to the public at no cost through the Internet.

(d) The searchable website shall contain Commission payment data including:

(1) the name of each payee receiving a payment;

(2) the location of the payee by postal zip code; and

(3) the amount of the payment.

(e) The searchable website shall allow the user to:

(1) search data for fiscal year 2019 and each fiscal year thereafter; and

(2) search by the following data fields:

(i) a payee receiving a payment; and

(ii) the zip code of a payee receiving a payment.

~~(F) THE SEARCHABLE WEBSITE SHALL CONTAIN ALL BOND RATING REPORTS ISSUED FOR THE COMMISSION FROM ONE OF THE MAJOR CREDIT RATING AGENCIES, INCLUDING:~~

~~(1) A COPY OF ANY AUDITS COMPLETED IN RELATION TO A BOND RATING REPORT; AND~~

~~(2) A COPY OF ANY FINANCIAL STATEMENTS PROVIDED IN RELATION TO A BOND RATING REPORT.~~

~~(G) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE SEARCHABLE WEBSITE SHALL CONTAIN DATA RELATED TO THE REFUND HEARING BOARD OF THE COMMISSION AND THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION BOARD OF THE COMMISSION, INCLUDING:~~

~~(I) THE NUMBER OF CASES FILED;~~

~~(II) THE NUMBER OF CASES CLOSED;~~

~~(III) THE NUMBER OF CASES GRANTED;~~

~~(IV) THE NUMBER OF CASES DENIED;~~

~~(V) THE REFUND AMOUNT REQUESTED IN EACH CASE; AND~~

~~(VI) THE REFUND AMOUNT GRANTED IN EACH CASE.~~

~~(2) THE DATA PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION MAY NOT CONTAIN ANY PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.~~

~~(H) THE SEARCHABLE WEBSITE SHALL INCLUDE A COPY OF ANY STRESS TESTING COMPLETED FOR ANY LONG RANGE PLANNING SCENARIOS DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 17-202.1 OF THIS TITLE.~~

(F) (1) SUBJECT TO PARAGRAPH (2) OF THIS SUBSECTION, THE SEARCHABLE WEBSITE SHALL CONTAIN:

**(I) ANY DOCUMENTS RELATING TO A BOND RATING RECEIVED
FROM A MAJOR CREDIT RATING AGENCY;**

**(II) DATA RELATED TO THE REFUND HEARING BOARD OF THE
COMMISSION, INCLUDING:**

1. THE NUMBER OF CASES FILED;

2. THE NUMBER OF CASES CLOSED;

3. THE NUMBER OF CASES GRANTED;

4. THE NUMBER OF CASES DENIED;

5. THE REFUND AMOUNT REQUESTED IN EACH CASE;

AND

6. THE REFUND AMOUNT GRANTED IN EACH CASE;

**(III) DATA RELATED TO THE DISPUTE RESOLVING BOARD OF
THE COMMISSION, INCLUDING:**

1. THE NUMBER OF CASES FILED;

2. THE NUMBER OF CASES CLOSED;

3. THE NUMBER OF CASES GRANTED;

4. THE NUMBER OF CASES DENIED;

5. THE UNPAID AMOUNT DISPUTED IN EACH CASE; AND

6. THE AMOUNT OF RELIEF GRANTED IN EACH CASE;

AND

**(IV) A COPY OF ANY STRESS TESTING COMPLETED FOR A
LONG-RANGE COMPREHENSIVE FINANCIAL PLAN DEVELOPED IN ACCORDANCE
WITH § 17-202.1 OF THIS TITLE.**

**(2) THE DATA PROVIDED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS
SUBSECTION MAY NOT CONTAIN ANY PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION.**

[(f)] ~~(H)~~ (G) This section may not be construed to require the disclosure of
information that is required to be kept confidential under federal, State, or local law.

1 ~~[(g)]~~ **(H)** (1) Subject to paragraph (2) of this subsection, the county council or
2 county executive of Montgomery County or Prince George's County may, in person or by a
3 duly authorized agent, audit and examine the books and records of the Commission.

4 (2) The Commission may not be required to pay the cost of the audit or
5 examination under paragraph (1) of this subsection.

6 17-607.

7 (a) **(1)** The Commission shall include in the Commission's annual operating
8 budget proposal the amounts recommended for the Office.

9 **(2)** THE BUDGET AUTHORIZATION FOR THE OFFICE SHALL BE
10 APPROVED INDEPENDENTLY AND WITHOUT THE INVOLVEMENT OF COMMISSION
11 STAFF.

12 (b) Subject to budget authorization and adequate funds:

13 (1) the Commission's general counsel shall provide legal services to the
14 inspector general and may employ special counsel if appropriate or required by law; and

15 (2) the inspector general may employ and be represented by a special legal
16 counsel without consent of the general counsel if the Commission approves of a request
17 after considering any recommendation or comment offered by the general counsel relating
18 to the request.

19 17-610.

20 **(A) (1)** ON OR BEFORE JUNE 1, 2026, AND EVERY 3 YEARS THEREAFTER,
21 THE OFFICE SHALL UNDERGO AN EXTERNAL, INDEPENDENT PEER REVIEW TO
22 ASSESS WHETHER THE OFFICE'S QUALITY CONTROL SYSTEM IS EFFECTIVELY
23 DESIGNED AND OPERATING IN COMPLIANCE WITH GENERALLY ACCEPTED
24 GOVERNMENT AUDITING STANDARDS.

25 **(2)** TO THE EXTENT PRACTICABLE, THE INITIAL PEER REVIEW
26 CONDUCTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION SHALL
27 INCLUDE:

28 **(I)** A REVIEW OF WHETHER THE OFFICE IS SUFFICIENTLY
29 INDEPENDENT OF THE COMMISSION AND COMMISSION STAFF; AND

30 **(II)** AN ANALYSIS OF WHETHER ADDITIONAL REVIEWS AND
31 REPORTS, INCLUDING THOSE EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE
32 COMMISSION'S INTERNAL CONTROLS OVER FINANCES, OPERATIONS, AND
33 COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES, WOULD HELP ACHIEVE THE DUTIES OF THE OFFICE.

1 (B) (1) THE OFFICE SHALL SUBMIT THE RESULTS OF THE PEER REVIEW
2 CONDUCTED UNDER SUBSECTION (A) OF THIS SECTION TO:

3 (I) THE COUNTY COUNCILS OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND
4 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY;

5 (II) IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE
6 GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE MEMBERS OF THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND
7 PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY DELEGATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY; AND

8 (III) THE COMMISSION.

9 (2) THE COMMISSION SHALL PUBLISH EACH PEER REVIEW
10 CONDUCTED UNDER THIS SECTION ON THE COMMISSION'S WEBSITE.

11 25-504.

12 ~~(a) The Commission:~~

13 ~~(1) may provide for the billing and collection of the water and sewer usage~~
14 ~~charges on an estimated basis for periods of 6 months or less, based on the historical daily~~
15 ~~average consumption calculated from actual previous usage;~~

16 ~~(2) shall read the meter at least once every 6 months; and~~

17 ~~(3) (i) shall base the final bill for the 6-month period on the actual~~
18 ~~consumption adjusted by previous estimates, if the meter had not been read because it was~~
19 ~~inaccessible;~~

20 ~~(ii) shall base the final bill for the 6-month period on the historical~~
21 ~~daily average consumption, calculated from actual previous usage, if a final reading cannot~~
22 ~~be made because:~~

23 ~~1. the meter malfunctioned;~~

24 ~~2. the meter had been taken out of service for repairs,~~
25 ~~maintenance, or water system relining purposes; or~~

26 ~~3. there was theft of service;~~

27 ~~(iii) may modify the historical daily average consumption calculation~~
28 ~~based on appropriate evidence submitted by the owner; [and]~~

~~(iv) MAY NOT LIMIT HOW FREQUENTLY A CUSTOMER MAY
RECEIVE AN ADJUSTMENT UNDER § 3.20.040(A) OR (B) OF THE WASHINGTON
SUBURBAN SANITARY COMMISSION CODE OF REGULATIONS; AND~~

~~(v) may not base a final bill on estimated usage for two consecutive
6-month periods.~~

(b) (1) (I) The Commission shall bill for the amount of water and sewer
usage charges to each property served monthly, every other month, ~~OR~~ four times a year,
~~for twice a year,~~ as the Commission determines.

(II) 1. IT IS THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY THAT
THE COMMISSION SHALL BILL ON A ~~MONTHLY BASIS~~ FIXED PERIODIC BASIS, SUCH
AS MONTHLY OR QUARTERLY BILLING, WITHOUT THE USE OF ESTIMATED BILLING.

2. SUBSUBPARAGRAPH 1 OF THIS SUBPARAGRAPH MAY
NOT BE CONSTRUED TO ENDORSE ANY PARTICULAR TECHNOLOGY OR APPROACH TO
IMPLEMENTING THE INTENT OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

(2) On receipt each bill is payable to the Commission.

(H) ON OR BEFORE NOVEMBER 1, 2026, AND EACH YEAR THEREAFTER, THE
COMMISSION SHALL REPORT TO THE COUNTY COUNCILS FOR MONTGOMERY
COUNTY AND PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY THE TOTAL NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS IN
THE IMMEDIATELY PRECEDING YEAR THAT REPORTED BILLS EXCEEDING THE
LIMITS FOR HIGH BILL ADJUSTMENTS UNDER THE WASHINGTON SUBURBAN
SANITARY COMMISSION CODE OF REGULATIONS.

~~28-102.~~

~~THE COMMISSION SHALL APPOINT A REPRESENTATIVE TO SERVE ON THE
COORDINATING COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED UNDER PART IV OF THE 1984 AVENEL
FARM DEVELOPMENT PLAN MASTER AGREEMENT SIGNED BY THE COMMISSION.~~

~~SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:~~

~~(a) The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission shall study the feasibility of
using differential rates among different customer classes for the Commission's service rates
and charges, including studying the revenue possibilities of and economic impact on the
different customer classes.~~

~~(b) On or before October 1, 2026, the Commission shall report its findings and
recommendations, including any recommended statutory changes, to the members of the
Montgomery County and Prince George's County delegations to the General Assembly, in
accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.~~

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

2 (a) The Director of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental
3 Protection, or the Director's designee, shall become a member of the Washington Suburban
4 Sanitary Commission beginning on the date that the term expires for one of the next two
5 commissioners from Montgomery County whose terms expire after October 1, 2025.

6 (b) In accordance with subsection (a) of this section, the County Executive of
7 Montgomery County shall determine which commissioner term shall apply as the
8 beginning of the term for the Director of the Montgomery County Department of
9 Environmental Protection, or the Director's designee, to serve as a member of the
10 Commission.

11 SECTION 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

12 (a) (1) On or before November 1, 2025, the Washington Suburban Sanitary
13 Commission shall report to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State
14 Government Article, on procedural changes that are being developed and finalized to
15 enhance the customer engagement process for customers that receive high bills.

16 (2) On or before November 1, 2026, the Commission shall report to the
17 General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on the
18 full implementation of the procedural changes described under paragraph (1) of this
19 subsection.

20 (b) The Commission shall:

21 (1) publish the procedural changes reported under subsection (a) of this
22 section on the Commission's website; and

23 (2) include information on the procedural changes in customer notification
24 letters.

25 SECTION 4. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

26 (a) Notwithstanding recognition by the General Assembly that the authority for
27 the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission to consider an ad valorem tax in
28 accordance with § 22-112 of the Public Utilities Article has never been used by the
29 Commission and that the Commission has no intention of imposing an ad valorem tax, the
30 Commission shall work with the State Department of Assessments and Taxation and, as
31 necessary, other stakeholders, including Montgomery County and Prince George's County,
32 to assess the ad valorem taxes necessary to support the Commission's debt solely for the
33 purpose of compliance with this section.

34 (b) (1) On or before December 1, 2026, the Commission shall report the
35 assessment under subsection (a) of this section to the county councils of Montgomery

County and Prince George's County and the members of the Montgomery County and Prince George's County delegations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article.

(2) In the report submitted under paragraph (1) of this subsection, the Commission may, solely for the purpose of compliance with this section, show additional ad valorem possibilities based on factors such as the level of debt service it can support or economic conditions.

SECTION 5. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission shall hire a consultant to conduct, in consultation with the Department of Legislative Services, an independent evaluation of the efficiency and sustainability of the Commission.

(b) The independent evaluation conducted under subsection (a) of this section shall include:

(1) a review of the Commission's budgetary process, including the annual setting of rates through the relevant county councils;

(2) a review of the Commission's process for entering into consent decrees;
and

(3) a review of the role the Public Service Commission plays in oversight of the Commission, including in the Public Service Commission's review of the reasonableness of any rate, charge, or assessment done in accordance with § 25–105 of the Public Utilities Article.

(c) On or before October 1, 2027, the independent evaluation required under subsection (a) of this section shall be submitted to the Commission, the county councils of Montgomery County and Prince George's County, and, in accordance with § 2–1257 of the State Government Article, the General Assembly.

(d) The Commission shall publish the independent evaluation on the Commission's website.

SECTION ~~5~~ 6. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That:

(a) The Office of ~~Program Evaluation and Government Accountability in the Department of Legislative Services~~ the Inspector General in the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission shall conduct a review of the efficiency and sustainability of the operations of the ~~Washington Suburban Sanitary~~ Commission.

(b) The review conducted under subsection (a) of this section shall include:

~~(1) a review of the statutory provisions related to the Commission, including the Commission's regulations, policies, and procedures;~~

~~(2) a review of the Commission's budgetary process, including the annual setting of rates through the relevant county councils;~~

~~(3) a review of the Commission's process for entering into consent decrees;~~

~~(4) a review of the subject matter expertise of appointed commissioners;~~

~~(5) benchmarking with other systems across a range of operating cost metrics related to the efficiency and sustainability of the Commission;~~

~~(6)~~ (2) a review of the effectiveness of the Commission's capital program and its ability to maintain water and sewer distribution pipelines and processing plants that meet asset management standards;

~~(7)~~ (3) a study on the Commission's use of its police force, including:

(i) a comparison of the size and scope of the Commission's police force with the police force of other utilities; and

(ii) whether there are more efficient approaches to water utility security and policing;

~~(8)~~ (4) an analysis on the impact of the Commission not being a government entity in the context of access to government programs that provide customer water assistance or other available funding; and

~~(9) a review of the role the Public Service Commission plays in oversight of the Commission, including in its review of the reasonableness of any rate, charge, or assessment done in accordance with § 25-105 of the Public Utilities Article; and~~

~~(10) an analysis of whether the Office of the Inspector General of the Commission is effective in achieving the purposes of the Office, including:~~

~~(i) whether the Office is sufficiently independent of the Commission and management within the Commission; and~~

~~(ii) whether the mandate of the Office should include additional reviews and reports that would help achieve the purposes of the Office, including reports on the effectiveness of internal controls over finance, operations, and compliance activities~~

(5) a review of the Commission's approach to coordinating road work with other utilities and government agencies.

(c) (1) On or before October 1, 2027, the Office ~~of Program Evaluation and Government Accountability~~ shall report its findings and recommendations to the Department of Legislative Services and the members of the Montgomery County and Prince George's County delegations to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article.

(2) The Department shall conduct a review of the report submitted under paragraph (1) of this subsection and report its findings to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, on or before October 1, 2028.

SECTION ~~4~~ 7. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2025. ~~Section 2 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 1 year and 1 month and, at the end of October 31, 2026, Section 2 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect. Section 3 of this Act shall remain effective for a period of 2 years and 1 month and, at the end of October 31, 2027, Section 3 of this Act, with no further action required by the General Assembly, shall be abrogated and of no further force and effect.~~

Approved:

Governor.

Speaker of the House of Delegates.

President of the Senate.