

# REPORT OF THE CECIL COUNTY

## WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

### TASK FORCE

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The Cecil County Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Task Force has concluded that the nine (9) existing disconnected water and wastewater systems, individually owned by the eight (8) towns and the County, not only do not serve the best interests of the overall County but in fact work to the great detriment of the overall County, its citizens, and, not least, its tax payers.

In the case of towns, all too often their sole priorities appear to be what they perceive to be in their short-term interests without regard to what may be in the best long-term interests of the overall County. The common refrain among the towns is that they want "control."

The Cecil County Water and Wastewater Task Force therefore makes the following recommendations:

- ✚ That a public, unified countywide entity be established with the long-term goal of combining the County-owned water and wastewater systems with the towns' water and wastewater systems and with private systems.
- ✚ That the County, as immediately as the countywide entity can be created, which may require enabling legislation in Annapolis, place its existing water and wastewater infrastructure within and under the ownership and control of the new countywide entity.
- ✚ That as an interim step, the County establish a new County Department of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, with its own Director and staff, whose sole responsibilities would be the operation and maintenance of the County-owned water and wastewater systems and their expansion in the designated growth areas.
- ✚ That the County, through the Office of Economic Development, obtain an updated Cecil County economic study from an outside

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consulting firm that addresses the economic issues related to water and wastewater infrastructure development.

- ✦ That the County, through the new County Department of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure, obtain an independent engineering study that establishes a detailed, comprehensive, countywide plan for Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Development.
- ✦ That the engineering study incorporate the conclusions of the economic study and conversely.
- ✦ That the County draft the legislation that may be necessary in the Maryland General Assembly to create a public, countywide entity that may initially consist of only the County-owned systems.
- ✦ That the County Commissioners immediately establish a five- (5) member Board of Advisors, supported by existing County Departments, with responsibility for interfacing with the new County Department of Water and Wastewater Infrastructure and its new Director and independently monitoring and communicating its progress and performance to the Commissioners.
- ✦ That the towns maintain control of zoning within the areas of future annexation identified in the Urban Growth Boundary Plan without interference from the County or the new public water and wastewater entity.
- ✦ That the development of Shared Facilities (water and wastewater systems) be encouraged pending the time when public water and wastewater are available in those areas.
- ✦ That at an appropriate future point in time, consideration be given to privatizing the water and wastewater systems if the benefits to the overall County prove compelling.