




TO: Chairman Freeman, Chairman Miller, and members of the House Local Government Committee

FROM: Jennie Shade, Senior Director of Government Relations 

DATE: April 8, 2025

SUBJECT: Support of HB 50 P.N. 40

I am writing on behalf of the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA), a statewide organization that represents over 700 municipal authorities across Pennsylvania. Together, these authorities serve more than six million people, with the vast majority providing essential drinking water and wastewater treatment services to communities across the state.

PMAA supports HB 50 P.N. 40, which amends the Water Services Act to require a city of the third-class with a home rule charter seeking to privatize its water or wastewater system to obtain approval from at least 75% of the surrounding municipalities served by the system. Additionally, it removes the population-based requirement, ensuring that all citizens – regardless of community size – have a fair and meaningful opportunity to participate in such significant decisions. This bill helps ensure that Pennsylvania’s water and wastewater systems remain in public hands, where they can continue to serve the best interests of the people.

As the Commonwealth experiences a growing trend of water and wastewater systems being sold to for-profit companies, it is imperative that the voices of ratepayers and local residents are not only heard but also given a substantial influence in the decision-making process. We know that when public water and sewer systems are sold to for-profit companies, ratepayers face drastic increases in their bills. These rate hikes are aimed at generating profits for private corporations. Such increases place an additional burden on families, particularly in communities that are already struggling with affordability challenges.

Beyond financial impacts, public water and wastewater systems require ongoing maintenance and upgrades, which are already accounted for as part of a public system’s reasonable and uniform rates. Unfortunately, when systems are sold to private companies, these necessary investments are often deprioritized in favor of maximizing profits. Public ownership, in contrast, ensures that rates remain fair, transparent, and are exclusively used for system maintenance and improvement, preserving the continued provision of affordable, reliable, and quality service to all residents.

To further demonstrate our support, PMAA has adopted the following resolution as part of our 2025 advocacy platform:

Resolution 3-25

RESOLVED, That PMAA supports efforts to preserve public ownership of infrastructure by educating the ratepayer and the public about the benefits of publicly owned infrastructure, including delivering affordable, safe, and quality service, and ensuring the community understands the vital importance of public ownership of its natural resource, a basic human right.

As Pennsylvania continues to grapple with the complex issues surrounding the privatization of essential services, we believe this legislation is an important step in empowering communities and ensuring they retain control over their vital water and wastewater systems. This bill will foster transparency, protect the interests of ratepayers, and ensure that decisions are made in the public's best interest.

On behalf of our members, we respectfully ask that you **support** HB 50 P.N. 40. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue. We also extend our appreciation to **Representative Borowski** for her leadership on this matter.

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About PMAA

For more than 80 years, the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA) has been the primary voice of community-based services representing the interests of more than 2,600 municipal authorities across the Commonwealth. Services provided by the Association include advocacy on governmental affairs issues, education and training, and member benefit programs.