



November 22, 2023

Zachary Lansing, Water & Sciences Administration PIA Liaison
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Blvd.
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

RE: PIA Request for Records

Submitted via <https://mdepia.mde.state.md.us/>

Dear Mr. Lansing:

Pursuant to the Maryland Public Information Act ("PIA"), Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. §§ 4-101 to 4-601, as amended, Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility ("PEER"), requests the records described below from the Maryland Department of the Environment ("MDE").

Context of request

Climate change is expected to bring changes to water supplies throughout the state. These changes will affect the quality and quantity of drinking water supplies available to Maryland residents and businesses.

For example, the Town of Poolesville relies entirely on groundwater to serve its residences and businesses. Its well water system, which pulls an average of 500,000 gallons of water per day, is supplied by a federally designated sole source aquifer. (The aquifer supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water for its service area and there are no reasonably available alternative drinking water sources should the aquifer become contaminated.) Poolesville has been updating its master plan and is contemplating several residential subdivisions.

Access to information on the projected capacity of water supplies in Maryland as climate change continues to affect our region could help Poolesville and other communities throughout the state ensure that they are able to plan for how climate change may affect their water resources and to address the evolving water needs of their residents and businesses.

It is our understanding that MDE has studied the projected effects of climate change on Maryland's water supplies, but we have thus far been unable to locate a particular report

produced by a contractor under MDE supervision, "The Effects of Climate Change on Maryland's Water Supplies."

Request

PEER requests the following records generated between January 1, 2023 and the present, including any files located on the agency's SharePoint, Google Drive, DropBox, or any similar system of file storage and management, as well as files stored locally on any relevant custodian's hard drive or cloud-computing OneDrive system:

1. The report entitled "The Effects of Climate Change on Maryland's Water Supplies" (or similar title) by an MDE contractor. We believe this report to have been created in April 2023 and cleared for final review in October 2023. **We kindly request that you provide this record as soon as it is located.**
2. All records related to this report. **We are happy to receive this portion of our request in a second production batch if locating these records takes more time than locating the report itself.**

Please *exclude* routine or automatically generated emails such as news alerts, roundups, or similar services.

To protect individual employees, PEER does not seek the full names or other personally identifying information of employees named in responsive documents if it would unreasonably infringe upon their personal privacy.

For electronic records, please provide all records in their native file formats (i.e. not converted to PDF) with all metadata included, and for records such as emails which have files embedded or attached, please provide all attachments in their native formats. If records can only be produced as PDFs, we request all records be text searchable and OCR formatted.

Additionally, please provide the records either in (1) load-ready format with a CSV file index or excel spreadsheet, or, if that is not possible; (2) in .pdf format, without any "portfolios" or "embedded files." Portfolios and embedded files within files are not readily-accessible. Please do not provide the records in a single, or "batched," .pdf file.

Necessary clarification or narrowed scope

If the above requests are unclear, result in an abnormally large number of results, or otherwise impracticable, please contact the undersigned so I may provide clarification or narrow the scope of the request accordingly.

Similarly, if in the process of conducting a search for responsive records it appears that a large quantity of irrelevant material is being included or that the specific terms of the request may not encompass material that is clearly relevant to the request, please let me know.

In the event an exceptionally voluminous or complex set of potentially responsive records requires review, please advise us of the need to make rolling productions and a schedule on which PEER's request can be fully answered.

Fee Waiver Request

PEER requests that MDE waive fees related to this request. As a nonprofit organization, PEER has no commercial interest in the requested records, and the release of the records would benefit the public. As explained above, the Town of Poolesville relies on a federally designated sole source aquifer and is currently considering allowing for several residential subdivisions. It is critical for the Town not to overtax its water supply, and thus the report PEER seeks analyzing the effects of climate change on water supplies in Maryland would significantly contribute to the public's understanding of the issue in a meaningful way.

If you have any questions about this PIA request, please contact me by phone at (202) 792-1277 or by email. I look forward to receiving the agency's final response within 30 days in accordance with Md. General Provisions Code Ann. [§ 4-203](#).

Thanks very much in advance for your assistance; we appreciate the vital work you do to ensure public access to government records.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laura Dumais". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laura Dumais
Staff Counsel