



BRIAN E. FROSH, MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

# PRESS RELEASE

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## **Attorney General Frosh Files Lawsuit for Environmental Violations at Two Baltimore Area Wastewater Treatment Plants** *Lawsuit Seeks Civil Penalties and Injunction to Halt Polluting Discharges*

**BALTIMORE, MD (January 21, 2022)** – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh today filed a [lawsuit](#) today in Baltimore City circuit court on behalf of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to eliminate unpermitted discharges from the two largest wastewater treatment plants in Maryland: the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant and the Patapsco Wastewater Treatment Plant. Both plants are owned and operated by Baltimore City.

During multiple MDE inspections of the plants in 2021 and after review of information submitted by Baltimore City, MDE observed extensive violations of MDE-issued discharge permits. These violations include exceeding effluent limits, failing to report sampling results, failing to report non-compliance, failing to comply with effluent sampling and testing protocols, failing to maintain sampling equipment, failing to provide various required reports, failing to comply with stormwater discharge permit requirements, failing to provide adequate operating staff, and failing to efficiently operate the plants and conduct necessary maintenance.

“The violations outlined in our complaint allege significant and repeated violations of State and federal water pollution laws, endangering our waterways and drinking water,” said Attorney General Frosh. “Wastewater treatment plants are critical in our efforts to improve the health of the Bay and they must adhere to State permits and environmental laws.”

In addition to seeking civil penalties, the complaint also seeks an injunction requiring Baltimore City to take all necessary and appropriate actions to immediately stop unpermitted discharges of pollutants from the Back River and Patapsco Wastewater Treatment Plants, and to take all necessary and appropriate actions to prevent future unpermitted discharges of pollutants from the plants.

Blue Water Baltimore has also taken independent action to address violations at the Back River and Patapsco plants, and on December 15, 2021, filed a citizen suit against Baltimore City under the federal Clean Water Act in the U.S. District Court. MDE is issuing two notice-of-intent-to-

sue letters under the Clean Water Act, preserving its rights to intervene in the federal action as may be appropriate.

Patapsco WWTP

NOI: [https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/news%20documents/012122\\_PatapscoNOI.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/news%20documents/012122_PatapscoNOI.pdf)

Back River WWTP

NOI: [https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/news%20documents/012122\\_BackriverNOI.pdf](https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/news%20documents/012122_BackriverNOI.pdf)

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