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April 24, 2020

Wicomico County Council
Government Office Building, Room 302
Salisbury MD, 21803

Attn: Ms. Laura Hurley, R.P.
Council Administrator

Re: **Council Member Information Request**
Salisbury (SBY) Regional Airport Water Main Extension
Wicomico County, Maryland
GMB File No. 170106

Dear Ms. Hurley:

Thank you for reaching out to GMB seeking information on the SBY Airport Water Main Extension project. GMB's work for Wicomico County on this project began in November 2013. GMB initially provided a Feasibility Study that was completed and accepted in June 2014. It concluded that the most feasible and cost-effective option was extending water service from Wor-Wic College. The existing individual wells serving the Airport Facilities recorded violations for both lead and copper. In addition, the wells have recorded high iron, nitrates, and turbidity. If there is an interest, the report can be available. The alternative option for providing water to the Airport was a County sponsored stand-alone water system. By necessity, it would include water supply wells, treatment facilities, storage for system reliability and fire protection, and a distribution system. While technically feasible, this approach is expensive in both the initial capital cost as well as considerably more costly for annual operation and maintenance. Accordingly, the water main extension option was and still is in the best interest of the public.

Between 2014 and 2017, GMB assisted the County in efforts seeking funding by multiple loan and grant applications from State and Federal sources. There were two (2) important conditions associated with the funding from the State. First, the State of Maryland Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Coordinating Committee (SGCC) granted an exception specific to the Airport for water service and required that the water main be treated as a "denied access line". The underlying rationale for the exception was premised upon protecting *public health or safety*. An individual residence with a failed onsite well would not qualify as *public health or safety* in the context of justifying a special exception. From our professional experience, we do not believe it is realistic or practical to presume that the Wicomico Health Department would deny a property owner the option of drilling a replacement well. If an existing surface well were to fail, there are numerous alternatives including drilling a deeper well in a confined aquifer for reasonable costs. We are not aware of any comparable situation or regulations giving the State authority to force an annexation. The second important condition for an individual connection to the denied access water main is the County Council's required approval to amend the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water & Sewage Plan. Accordingly, the County Council has a significant voice and authority to prevent or allow a residential connection to the water line.

Please note that GMB is currently serving the County in undertaking a County-wide Water & Sewer Master Plan which will suggest remedies, should public health and safety concerns arise, other than City Annexation for areas such as Kilbirnie Estates and the Walston Manufactured Home Community.

The Wicomico County Health Department is the first unit of government for which private individuals must rely upon for onsite water supply and sewage disposal. We are not aware of any authority or State regulation allowing the Wicomico County Health Department to force annexation upon an individual residence.

We are aware of Maryland rules and regulations requiring connection, within 12 months, to public water and sewer systems in the "vicinity". This provision was applicable to the Morris Mill area when the County constructed the water distribution system. A water main designated as a *denied access line* is not considered a public water main.

Part of the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water & Sewage Plan is maintaining water and sewer service designations to parcels. Maps are maintained for sewer and water separately. The following is a summary of service designations:

- W-1 = The parcel is currently served by a community water system.
- W-2= The parcel is to be served by community water and is in the planning stages of extending water to the parcel.
- W-3 = The parcel does not have community water, but the parcel will be given priority if needed. This could be based on an area of know sewer or water concerns.
- W-4 & W-5 = The parcel is planned for future community water service within the next 3-5 years or 6-10 years respectively.
- W-6 = The parcel is not programmed or planned to have community water service therefore it is designated at 10+ years.

For the SBY Airport Water Main Extension project the Airport parcel was granted approval to re-designate the parcel from W-6 to W-2 to allow community water service to the property. As discussed above this approval was granted by the County and State only because the water line to the parcel is a *denied access line*. All surrounding parcels remain with a designation of W-6. Approvals would have to be provided, per parcel, by both the County and State to change the W-6 designation to W-2 and allow any additional connection to the water main. Attached is the approved Water Map 15 associated with the Wicomico County Comprehensive Water & Sewage Plan. Note the Walston Manufactured Home Community is shaded as W-1 because it is served by its own privately maintained water system and sewage system which is monitored by the Wicomico County Health Department.

The water main project to serve the Airport Facilities has been, and now is more than ever, in the long-term best interest of Wicomico County. It is the most cost-effective and practical approach to protect public health and safety and will promote economic sustainability for not only Wicomico County but also Delmarva.

GMB appreciates the opportunity over the past six years to work with Wicomico County on this critical project and to be part of the long-term goal of addressing public health needs and increasing the economic stability of our region.

Please do not hesitate to contact Peter Bozick Jr., P.E. (pbozick@gmbnet.com) or myself with any questions or to discuss this project in more detail.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Katherine J. McAllister, P.E.
Vice President/ Sr. Project Manager
kmcallister@gmbnet.com

KJM/PAB

WICOMICO COUNTY MARYLAND *Water and Sewer Plan*

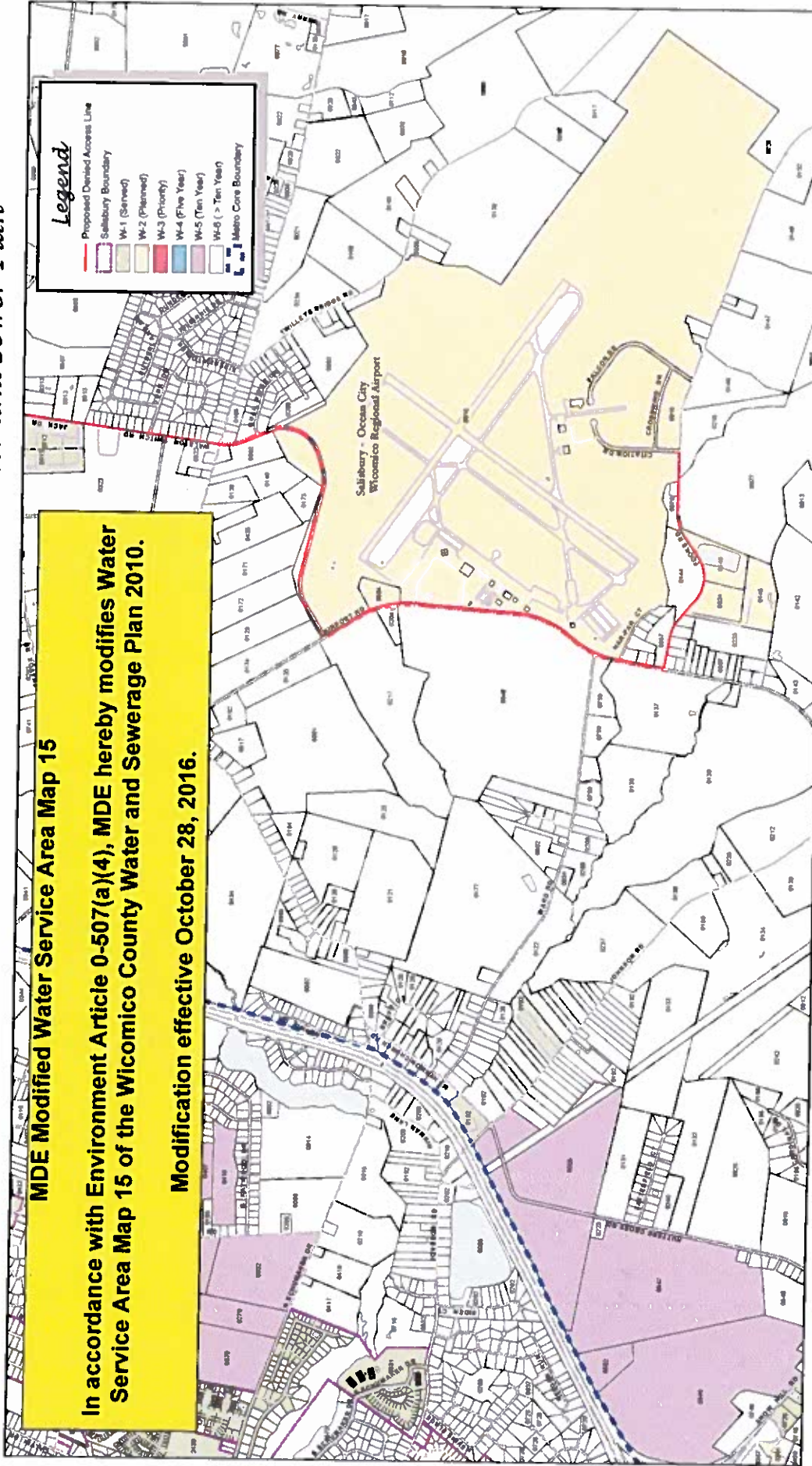
MDE Modified Water Service Area Map 15

In accordance with Environment Article 0-507(a)(4), MDE hereby modifies Water Service Area Map 15 of the Wicomico County Water and Sewerage Plan 2010.

Modification effective October 28, 2016.

Legend

- Proposed Denied Access Line
- Salisbury Boundary
- W-1 (Served)
- W-2 (Planned)
- W-3 (Priority)
- W-4 (Five Year)
- W-5 (Ten Year)
- W-6 (> Ten Year)
- Metro Core Boundary



Scale 1" = 1500'



Salisbury East Vicinity **WATER** Service

2016
Map 15