



SENATE BILL 445: Regulatory Reform Act of 2026, Sec. 18: Increase Civil Penalty for Water Theft.

2025-2026 General Assembly

Analysis of: S.L. 2026-59, Sec. 18

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Section 18 of S.L. 2026-59 (Senate Bill 445) amends a statute that prohibits any person from willfully making any connection with, interfering with, or turning on or off the gas mains, water pipes, services pipes, or wires of another without the person's written permission, to do both of the following:

- Add a definition for "water pipes" to include "fire hydrants, flushing assemblies, blow-offs, sampling stations, and all other appurtenances connected to a water distribution system, whether above or below ground."
- For any person who is found in a civil action to have unlawfully made connection or reconnection with any water pipe, increase the cap on liability to the water supplier to triple the amount of losses and damages or \$10,000, whichever is greater, plus attorneys' fees (from triple the amount of losses and damages or \$5,000, whichever is greater).

This section becomes effective December 1, 2026, and applies to offenses committed on or after that date.

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