



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 10, 2020

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West, Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Re: Senate Bill 254 – On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems – Inspection – Licensing

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has reviewed Senate Bill 254, entitled On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems – Inspection - Licensing and would like to offer a letter of concern about this legislation.

Senate Bill 254 proposes to repeal §9-217.1 of the Environment Article, which would nullify the current process of obtaining a license for performing septic inspection for property transfers and would require all current licensees to be recertified through the new proposed process as required by this legislation. Additionally, the Department would need to develop and adopt regulations governing the eligibility and minimum training required for the new onsite property transfer inspector license. The legislation expands the need for a license for all people inspecting onsite septic systems. The regulations would need to be completed by January 1, 2021 and many of the certifications for the new licenses would need to be completed by July 1, 2021. Currently, there are 1,125 Certified Inspectors that would need to be relicensed. MDE also anticipates an additional 1,175 people would apply to become certified licensed inspectors.

At current staffing levels, MDE does not have the resources to create and implement the new licensing process in the allotted time period. The legislation as proposed does not provide any funding or positions to implement the new process. Additionally, due to the increase number of certified licensed inspectors and the more rigorous training to identify compliant status of on-site systems, the Department would anticipate an increase in the amount of on-site septic systems found to be in non-compliance. Many of these non-compliant septic systems will require innovative and alternative technology (IAT). The Department typically provides their expertise and oversight for IAT septic projects. Additional staff would also be required to maintain our current level of oversight.

Thank you for your consideration. We will continue to monitor Senate Bill 254 during the Committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or by e-mail at tyler.abbott@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Ronald N. Young