



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

House Bill 1512

***Bay Restoration Fund – Use of Funds – Municipal Wastewater Facilities – Sunset
Repeal***

Position: Support
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Date: April 2, 2024
From: Gabrielle Leach

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** House Bill 1512.

Bill Summary

House Bill 1512 would remove the sunset date of June 30, 2024 for allowing the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) to be used for connecting a property currently using an on-site sewage system to a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) that has a signed funding agreement with MDE and is under construction to achieve biological nutrient removal (BNR) or enhance nutrient removal (ENR) levels of nutrient reduction. The bill makes this authorized use of BRF funding permanent.

Position Rationale

House Bill 1512 would continue a current practice established by 2020 legislation. Since 2020, MDE has been able to connect failing septic systems to WWTPs that are under construction to achieve ENR due to this expansion to the BRF.

At this time, MDE is funding six local government WWTPs that are under construction to achieve ENR. These are the WWTPs that could currently allow for the connection of septic systems under this legislation. Additionally, MDE is working with sixteen other WWTPs that are in planning or design that would be eligible under this bill when they advance to construction. The number of septic systems that would be connected under this legislation would be minimal, but it is important to extend this authorization as there continue to be failing septic systems in close proximity to these WWTPs.

Without this legislation those homeowners, who pay into the BRF annually, would not be able to utilize grant funding to connect to a WWTP until the upgrade to ENR is complete. This could mean waiting 2-3 years, or possibly longer, before being able to connect. This will cause a financial hardship to those homeowners, as well as allowing known public health and environmental pollution issues to continue. This legislation is needed to reduce these risks on the environment and public health.

For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges an **FAVORABLE** report for HB 1512.

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