



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **House Bill 245**

Department of the Environment - Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation

Date: January 31, 2024

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

Position: Favorable

From: Matt Stegman

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** HB 245, which authorizes the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to alter various fees for programs and services provided by the Department. As the State begins to weather a period of fiscal uncertainty, it is increasingly important that MDE's fees are evaluated in a way that is both environmentally and fiscally sustainable.

### **Well and Septic Permit Application Fees:**

Currently, most well and septic permitting is carried out by local health departments and county governments who charge a fee to process the permit. Their authority to do so is delegated from MDE. MDE does not have the same ability to charge for this service in instances where it may have had well and septic permitting restored. This enabling change will ensure there are sufficient resources available to run the permitting program, which helps ensure septic systems are not contributing to Bay pollution.

### **Responsible Personnel Training Program Certification:**

Construction activity continues to be a major contributor to nutrient loads in the Bay. This program ensures that larger construction projects have a responsible person on site to manage erosion, sediment, and runoff issues. Peer jurisdictions charge a fee for similar training programs.

### **Wetlands and Waterways Application Fees:**

Fees for wetlands and waterways applications were last meaningfully updated in 2012. These funds support the wetlands and waterways permit review process as well as general management, conservation, protections, and preservation of Maryland's waterways.

### **Air Emissions Permit Fees:**

MDE proposes to increase the Operating Permit Program fee for regulated air pollutant emissions from \$70 per ton to \$200 per ton. This increase is necessary to maintain the current level of service for the program, which plays a vital role in reducing air pollution in the State.

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*The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.*

The complete package of fees included in this legislation is carefully curated and share a common theme of putting the burden of increased program costs on the users of the programs. This is a responsible approach that encourages greater compliance with State laws and regulations. This legislation is expected to produce a \$12.1 million total annual fiscal impact for MDE, allowing the agency to advance its responsibilities for environmental protection and enforcement.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 245.**

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at [mstegman@cbf.org](mailto:mstegman@cbf.org).