



Senate Bill 726

Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses - Decommission of Wastewater Treatment Lagoon

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Committee

Date: February 20, 2024

From: Dominic J. Butchko

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 726. This bill allows for the use of Bay Restoration Funds to include the cost of decommissioning wastewater treatment lagoons.

The Bay Restoration Fund was created in 2004 with the express purpose of providing a dedicated funding stream to help local government wastewater treatment facilities reduce certain nutrients from reaching the Chesapeake Bay. The Fund supports upgrades to Maryland's 67 major publicly owned wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) with enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) technology. Additionally, funds are used for septic system upgrade grants, and the Cover Crop Program within the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

Counties support SB 726 as it gives flexibility to existing resources aimed at improving the health and vitality of Maryland's most important defining feature. The projects described in SB 726 are, along with the current list of eligible projects, suitable elements of a healthy and properly managed watershed. A healthy Chesapeake Bay ultimately means healthy economies and a high quality of life for our mutual constituents.

For this reason, MACo urges the Committee to give SB 726 a **FAVORABLE** report.