



**HB747 - Environment - On-Site Wastewater Systems - Requirements for Inspection and Pumping Services**  
**March 25, 2025**

Position: Favorable

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Clean Water Action supports HB747. Clean Water Action is a national environmental and drinking water advocacy organization with an office in Baltimore since 1980. We have worked on the issues surrounding septic systems for almost ten years and have been grateful for the legislative advances the General Assembly has made over those intervening years. Maryland has come a long way forward in how it addresses septic systems and pollution.

Pollution from septic systems is an issue for many parts of the state outside the critical area – or 1000 feet around tidal waters of the Chesapeake Bay. As an organization very focused on drinking water quality, protecting the freshwater drinking water sources that we use is absolutely vital.

Maryland has approximately 420,000 septic systems across the state, and when they fail they release untreated or improperly treated waste into the surrounding area. This is a major concern for certain bodies of water, where surrounding failing septic systems pose health concerns.

If a septic system can be inspected before it fails, the homeowner can take action to prolong the life of the system – either fixing a part or changing behavior (like ceasing use of a garbage disposal or flushing inappropriate items or increasing pump out frequency). However, septic systems suffer from “flush and forget” - residents assume that as long as they can flush their toilet, everything is working fine.

HB747 provides the safeguard of having septic systems inspected at time of home sale or when a new renter moves in. This enables a glimpse into the system and provides the opportunity for repairs or changes to be made before the system poses a public health risk.

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To avoid redundant inspections, the bill allows an inspection to be valid for three years, although a mortgage lender would likely require its own current inspection. This both mirrors the well inspection requirement but also reflects the input from industry who felt like three years appropriately balanced the need to catch problems with avoiding redundancy. The general feeling was that a problem is unlikely to become a crisis in three years.

As amended in the House, HB747 uses a list of exceptions when a property transfer would not need an inspection. We feel like these exceptions reasonably balance the intent of the legislation – to prevent and fix failing septic systems – with flexibility for certain property transfer situations. The amendments also require that a failing system be reported to the delegated authority and that when the system is fixed, they are notified.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'ERanson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

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