

HB747 Geckle Back River EEE 3-25-25.pdf

Uploaded by: Dru Schmidt-Perkins

Position: FAV



BACK RIVER PRE-CAST, LLC
PO BOX 329
GLYNDON, MD 21071
410-833-3394

HB 747 Environment – Onsite Wastewater Systems – Requirement for Inspection and Pumping Services

March 25, 2025

Favorable

Back River Precast supports HB 747, as amended by the House Environment and Transportation Committee, and its requirement for a limited number of inspections of septic systems in Maryland.

A septic inspection can identify problems early when a repair can be relatively inexpensive. When a system fails it is very costly to replace. But a failed system is also very expensive for our environment putting sewage into our groundwater, nearby waterways and sometimes graphically bubbling up in yards or into basement.

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Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Matthew Geckle", written over a horizontal line.

Matthew Geckle

Vice-President

Arundel Rivers Testimony FAV HB747 inspections Sen

Uploaded by: Elle Bassett

Position: FAV



PO Box 760 Edgewater, MD 21037
410-224-3802 www.arundelrivers.org

Testimony in SUPPORT of HB747 – Environment – On-Site Wastewater Systems – Requirements for Inspection and Pumping Services

Energy, Education, and the Environment Committee
March 25, 2025

Dear Chair Feldman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT OF HB747**, on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Deeply rooted in the South, West, and Rhode Rivers, Arundel Rivers Federation heals and protects our waterways and champions clean water across Maryland. Our vision is healthy waterways for all, and we achieve our mission through restoration, education and outreach, and Riverkeeper programs.

HB747 will ensure that septic systems are properly inspected and pumped out prior to property transfer or a when new tenant occupies the property. Inspecting and pumping out septic systems is crucial for maintaining their functionality, preventing environmental hazards, and avoiding costly repairs. Inspections and regular pump outs will prevent system failures, protect public health, better protect our local environment, save costs and extend the lifespan of the septic system, and maintain property values.

If a septic system is not functioning correctly, it can cause groundwater pollution. Contaminated water from a failing system can seep into local rivers, or underground aquifers, impacting local ecosystems and wildlife. Regular pumping and inspections help safeguard the surrounding environment, preventing the spread of harmful contaminants. The Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report has highlighted the need to address non-point source pollution in our waterways. A conventional septic system does not remove much nitrogen, instead delivering about 23.2 pounds of nitrogen per year to groundwater. Even Best Available Technology (BAT) systems, only reduce nitrogen loading to about half that of a conventional system. Comparatively, wastewater treatment plants with enhanced nutrient removal can discharge effluent containing only 3milligrams per liter of nitrogen. **Pollution from septic systems now exceeds nitrogen pollution from our wastewater treatment plants in 17 counties.** Even in counties where wastewater treatment plants are contributing more nitrogen, septic systems are still having a large impact at the local subwatershed level. For example, **16% of Anne Arundel County's nitrogen loading is coming from septic systems.** This is likely higher in waterways such as the South, West, and Rhode River where there are no large wastewater treatment plants discharging.

Now that we have addressed the larger wastewater treatment plants through Bay Restoration Funds, it is time we begin addressing septic systems as part of the battle to address nitrogen pollution to meet our water quality goals. This bill takes a reasonable, inexpensive, and proactive step towards identifying problem systems and properly maintaining systems to prevent future problems.

Arundel Rivers is aware of proposed amendments from Delegate Guyton providing exceptions to required inspections and pump outs, which Arundel Rivers is supportive of. We are grateful to Delegate Guyton for introducing this important legislation and we respectfully request a **FAVORABLE REPORT on HB747.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West, and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

HB747_CleanWaterAction_FAV_Senate.pdf

Uploaded by: Emily Ranson

Position: FAV



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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Baltimore, MD 21230

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.

Emily Ranson
Chesapeake Regional Director
Clean Water Action
eranson@cleanwater.org

MDE HB747 SUP EEE.docx.pdf

Uploaded by: Jeremy D Baker

Position: FAV



The Maryland Department of the Environment
Secretary Serena McIlwain

House Bill 747

Environment - On-Site Wastewater Systems - Requirements for Inspection and Pumping Services

Position: Support with Amendments
Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment
Date: March 25, 2025
From: Alex Butler, Deputy Director of Government Relations

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** HB 747 **AS AMENDED**.

Bill Summary

House Bill 747 introduces new inspection and pumping requirements for on-site wastewater systems when a property is being rented or sold. Starting January 1, 2026, a property owner or landlord must have had the on-site wastewater system inspected by a licensed property transfer inspector and pumped out within 3 years prior to the property being sold or a new tenant moving into the property.

Position Rationale

MDE supports the bill as amended by the House. The bill's requirements are a reasonable and practical way to protect water quality, ensure on-site wastewater systems are functioning properly, and protect both homebuyers and renters.

HB 747 is drafted to § 9-217.2 of the Environment Article, which is set to be repealed on June 30, 2025. Its repeal aligns with the creation of the State Board of On-Site Wastewater Professionals under Title 9, Subtitle 11A of the Environment Article. The Board will ultimately oversee licensing and certification in the on-site wastewater field. The Board was created by HB 318 of 2022 but was not fully seated under 2024 due to legislation revising the Board's membership in 2023 (HB 30/SB 7) and need for Senate confirmation for many of the members, which occurred during the 2024 Session.

In order to assure a smooth regulatory transition from the requirements for property transfer inspectors over to the Board, MDE requested an amendment to extend the sunset provision of § 9-217.2 and the subsequent MDE regulations and Board licensing requirements by two years, to reflect the two-year delay in seating the Board.

House Bill 747 reinforces Maryland's commitment to safeguarding water quality and renter/homebuyer protections. Accordingly, MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE** report for HB 747.

Contact: Alex Butler, Deputy Director of Government Relations
Email: alex.butler@maryland.gov

Senate - HB 747 - Favorable - Del. Guyton.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation
Committee



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6 Bladen Street, Room 304
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800-492-7122 Ext. 3793
Michele.Guyton@house.state.md.us

THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 25, 2025

Favorable

HB 747 – On-Site Wastewater Systems – Requirement for Inspection and Pumping Services

Dear Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and Members of the Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of HB 747, which addresses environmental contamination associated with neglected wastewater systems. This legislation requires that septic systems must be inspected and pumped at the time of a property transfer if these services have not been performed in the past three years. The three-year timeline was suggested by the Maryland On-site Wastewater Association. I also negotiated amendments with the group to give exceptions for certain transfers such as between family members if there was an inspection in the previous five years when the transfer was through a refinancing or no change in ownership. There is additionally a requirement to report a failed septic system to the local health Department, modeled after the well inspection legislation that this body passed two years ago.

There is clear evidence that failing septic systems contribute to water contamination, particularly E. Coli, but there are currently no requirements to inspect them. This bill formalizes best practices and protects both homeowners, renters and our environment.

I respectfully ask for a favorable report on HB 747.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delegate Michele Guyton".

Delegate Michele Guyton
District 42B

Senate - HB 747 - Favorable - Del. Guyton.pdf

Uploaded by: Michele Guyton

Position: FAV

MICHELE GUYTON
Legislative District 42B
Baltimore County

Environment and Transportation
Committee



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THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

March 25, 2025

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Delegate Michele Guyton
District 42B