



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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*Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education*

## **Senate Bill 117**

### **Environment - Bay Restoration Fund - Septic System Upgrade Program**

Date: March 26, 2025

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **FAVORABLE**

From: Matt Stegman,  
Maryland Staff Attorney

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS Senate Bill 117**, which makes several changes to the prioritization for septic system upgrades funded through the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF). Specifically, the bill permits funding to be set based on system performance and alters the existing prioritization to include systems located in a nitrogen-impaired watershed and systems within the 500 year floodplain. The bill before the committee now reflects consensus amendments developed in partnership between the Maryland Department of the Environment and environmental advocates.

The Chesapeake Bay Program's Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report demonstrated a need to more completely address nonpoint source pollution in our waterways. The BRF has proven a tremendous success in upgrading major and minor wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) throughout the state and, consequently, reducing nitrogen loads into the Chesapeake Bay. Modern, effective WWTPs can treat effluent to as little as 3 milligrams per liter of nitrogen. Comparatively, even septic systems employing Best Available Technology (BAT) deliver significantly higher nitrogen loads. Pollution from septic systems now exceeds nitrogen pollution from WWTPs in 17 counties.

Maryland will not be able to achieve our water quality goals without doing a better job addressing septic. According to MDE, Maryland has approximately 420,000 septic systems in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, 52,000 of which are located in the Critical Area. Currently, BRF funding for septic upgrades are limited to the Critical Area, meaning that funding source can only reach approximately 12% of septic systems statewide. The bill would retain first priority for systems in the Critical Area, but ensure remaining funds are directed into areas where the consequences of failing systems are greatest.

**CBF requests the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 117.**

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

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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.