

**KATIE FRY HESTER**  
*Legislative District 9*  
Howard and Montgomery Counties

Education, Energy, and  
Environment Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology



*Annapolis Office*  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 304  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3671 • 301-858-3671  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671  
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

**Testimony in Support of SB117 - Environment - Bay Restoration Fund - Septic System Upgrade**

March 26, 2025

Chair Korman, Vice-Chair Boyce, and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 117, Environment - Bay Restoration Fund - Septic System Upgrade, a bill I am sponsoring upon request by MDE. SB 117 is the crossfire to HB 131, sponsored by Delegate Stein, which was voted out of this committee favorable with amendments several weeks ago. SB 117 is identical to HB 131 as it passed out of the House.

The Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) is a nationally recognized funding program that has played a critical role in Maryland's Chesapeake Bay and Atlantic Coastal Bays restoration efforts. The BRF provides financial assistance for wastewater treatment plant upgrades, septic system upgrades and sewer connections, and agricultural cover crops.

The bill as amended does several things:

1. Incorporates an additional two priorities for funding through the Septic Subaccount in the Bay Restoration Fund to more efficiently pay for nitrogen reductions.
2. Expands the eligibility for funding to "moderate-income" individuals when environmental health demands it.
3. Alters the date for funding eligibility for certain upgrades from an outdated 2008, to a "rolling" date of 15 years before the application is submitted.

With these changes, the BRF septic system subaccount will continue to help improve water quality and reduce nitrogen throughout all of Maryland's watersheds. Therefore, I respectfully request a favorable report on SB 117.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Howard and Montgomery Counties