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MAYOR

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SB0117

March 26, 2025

TO: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee

FROM: Nina Themelis, Director of Mayor's Office of Government Relations

RE: Senate Bill 117 – Environment - Bay Restoration Fund - Septic System Upgrade Program

POSITION: SUPPORT

Chair Korman, Vice Chair Boyce, and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore City Administration (BCA) **supports** Senate Bill (SB) 117.

SB 117 would modify Maryland's Bay Restoration Fund by updating how septic system upgrades are funded and prioritized. The bill would authorize the Department of the Environment to establish performance-based funding levels for nitrogen removal technologies in septic systems, using a systematic evaluation and ranking process. It creates a three-tier priority system for funding repairs: priority to failing systems in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area, second to systems near nitrogen-impaired waters, and third to other failing systems threatening public health or water quality. The legislation also expands eligibility for funding to include moderate-income homeowners and updates the qualification criteria for community sewerage system replacements.

Baltimore City Department of Public Works supports the bill, noting its minimal direct impact on the city due to the limited use of septic systems and the presence of established municipal infrastructure. By reducing nutrients from on-site sewage systems, the legislation would alleviate the burden on treatment facilities and improve discharge quality into state waters. Expanding funding for replacing outdated or failing systems, combined with a performance-based approach to nitrogen removal technologies, may offer meaningful improvements for Maryland's watersheds.

For the above stated reasons, the BCA respectfully requests a **favorable** report on SB 117.