

Superior Septic Services, LLC

Written Testimony

HB 146/SB 165 - Favorable with Amendments
Maryland General Assembly – 2026 Session

My name is Ryan Frick, and I am the owner of Superior Septic Services, LLC, with over 21 years of experience working on onsite wastewater systems throughout Maryland. I am submitting this testimony in support of HB 146 and SB 165, with technical amendments.

I fully support the intent of this legislation to protect public health, groundwater, and consumers by requiring Property Transfer Inspections (PTIs) and septic pumpouts. These measures will significantly improve transparency and environmental protection across the State.

However, based on long-standing industry standards and field experience, three targeted amendments are necessary to ensure the bill functions as intended.

First, PTIs and septic pumpouts must be coordinated and performed together. The most critical amendment to HB 146 and SB 165 is the requirement that a septic tank pumpout and Property Transfer Inspection (PTI), when both are required, be performed together and coordinated by the Property Transfer Inspector.

Allowing these services to be performed separately creates a significant risk of missed diagnoses, incomplete inspections, and potential misrepresentation of onsite system conditions. If a septic tank is pumped prior to the inspector's arrival, many of the most important diagnostic indicators are permanently lost.

Under nationally accepted inspection protocols, and as taught in Maryland's PTI training programs, a proper inspection includes pumping the septic tank while the inspection is actively in progress. This sequencing is critical because it allows the inspector to:

- Observe evidence of backups or surcharging in the tank
- Evaluate the condition of internal tank components, including baffles, tees, and structural integrity
- Observe hydraulic behavior, including any flow returning from the dispersal system during pumpdown
- Identify signs of system overload, failure, or improper operation that would otherwise remain hidden

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When a tank has already been pumped days or even hours before an inspection, these indicators no longer exist. In those situations, an inspector is limited to a surface-level evaluation that may falsely suggest the system is functioning properly.

This separation also opens the door to intentional concealment. A knowledgeable or motivated property owner could have the system pumped shortly before inspection to temporarily mask chronic issues such as backups, ponding, or dispersal failure. That outcome directly undermines the consumer-protection and environmental goals of this legislation.

This amendment does not expand the scope of the bill or increase regulatory burden. Instead, it ensures that inspections required under this legislation are accurate, meaningful, resistant to manipulation, and protective of consumers, public health, and the environment.

Second, Advanced Treatment Units (ATUs/BAT systems) should not be subject to mandatory pumpouts. These systems are monitored, operated, and maintained by licensed Operation and Maintenance providers, and improper or unnecessary pumping can damage system performance. Evaluation by a licensed O&M provider within six months is a more appropriate requirement.

Third, properties purchased for redevelopment, demolition, or sewer connection should be exempt, as PTIs and pumpouts in these cases provide no public health benefit and unnecessarily consume resources.

These amendments do not weaken this bill, they strengthen it. I respectfully support these bills with Amendments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully submitted,
Ryan Frick
Superior Septic Services, LLC