

An Affiliate of
the Maryland Association
of Counties, Inc.



Reply to:

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair
Appropriations Committee
121 House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: HB1484 – State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Fees – General Fund

Dear Madam Chair McIntosh and Committee Members:

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (the Conference) ***strongly supports*** **HB1484** as written with respect to repealing the existing State Board of Environmental Health Specialist Fund and directing future monies collected into the General Fund of the State.

The Licensed Environmental Health Specialists (LEHS's) are a dedicated but relatively small, group of Public Health professionals who play a key role in implementing and overseeing a number of critical health and environmental issues, initiatives and regulations established by the Maryland Department of Health (MDH), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), plus local jurisdictions. Ensuring safe public and private water supplies, proper food safety preparation, along with oversight of recreational venues are but a few of the essential public health duties assigned to LEHS's.

Key to the continued level of professionalism, approval and oversight of training requirements, disciplinary determinations, along with general operations, rests with the Board of Environmental Health Specialists (the Board). In July 2012, when the Board was moved to the MDH Boards and Commissions, the Board was also moved out of general funds and into special funding. This despite the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to keep the Board general funded. With a limited membership (approximately 550 LEHS's) and recurring expenditure gaps, using the special funding status to support its on-going and increasing operational costs results in undue risk and threatens the Board's existence.

The Conference believes that the ability to maintain and sustain the Board with adequate funding to meet existing balance shortfalls can best be achieved with the move out of a special fund obligation, and back into a general fund payment and support structure. Accordingly, we request the Committee **SUPPORT HB1484** as written.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views on this matter. If you have further questions concerning this written testimony, please contact me at 301-883-7602.

Respectfully,

Evelyn Hoban, President
Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors