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POSITION STATEMENT

Senate Bill 495- Bay Restoration Fund - Use of Funds - Municipal Wastewater Facilities
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
February 11, 2020

The Rural Maryland Council **SUPPORTS** Senate Bill 495 - Bay Restoration Fund - Use of Funds - Municipal Wastewater Facilities. Maryland's Bay Restoration Fund funds wastewater treatment plant upgrades, cover crops, and septic upgrades to significantly reduce nitrogen pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland waterways.

This bill expands the authorized uses of the Bay Restoration Fund to include certain costs associated with the connection of a property using an on-site sewage disposal system to an existing municipal wastewater facility that has signed a funding agreement with the Department of the Environment and is under construction to achieve enhanced nutrient removal or biological nutrient removal level treatment; specifying that these costs may be provided only if certain conditions are met.

Small municipalities across the State are struggling with infrastructure needs. Aging water and waste water facilities are a major challenge. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates \$9.92 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs over the next 20 years.
<https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/state-item/maryland/>

A core component of rural prosperity includes enhancing the deployment of housing, transportation, water, wastewater, and broadband communications infrastructure and services in rural areas. The Rural Maryland Council administers the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) which contains an infrastructure funding program. In Fiscal Year 2018 and 2019, funds from RMPIF were awarded to the City of Crisfield in the amount of \$375,000.00 to support the replacement of a failing wastewater pumping station and associated infrastructure throughout the City. Overall funding needs for sewer replacement totaled almost \$20 million. With a small population, only a small percentage of the overall replacement cost can be covered by the local ratepayers. Additional funding is necessary.

Other grant funding opportunities like these found through the Council and Maryland Department of the Environment's Bay Restoration Fund are invaluable and essential to Maryland's rural communities and the updating of their aging septic infrastructure. The Council respectfully requests your favorable support of SB 495.

The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) brings together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of Rural Maryland communities. We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, economic and community development organizations, for-profit and nonprofit corporations, and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information, and address in a more holistic way the special needs and opportunities in Rural Maryland.

"A Collective Voice for Rural Maryland"