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The Maryland House of Delegates
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**Testimony of Delegate Dana Stein in Support of
HB 136 Environment – On site Wastewater Services - Regulation**

On-site wastewater systems, or septic systems, are a home's most expensive appliance. Over 420,000 homes in Maryland have septic systems. But this appliance is underground. Problems with design, installation, and maintenance can hide for years at a time. This means a system that is supposed to clean household sewage could be contaminating the ground, wells or nearby streams.

Given the cost and importance of these hidden systems, it is critical that the people who design, install, maintain, and repair them are properly trained. Stories abound about problems that occur when the system is not well designed, installed or maintained.

HB 136 will bring much needed standards to the septic industry, by creating a board to oversee the licensing procedures for people in the industry, such as Master and Journey installers, property transfer inspectors, operations and maintenance providers, and pumpers.

HB 136 will ensure that:

- Homeowners and buyers are protected from poorly trained contractors.
- The systems are designed and built to quality standards.
- Property values are protected by keeping these systems in good repair.

The board established by HB 136 is just like the licensing boards for plumbers, electricians, well drillers and other trade professionals. The board has the authority

to set reasonable fees for issuing and renewing licenses, and these fees will be used to maintain the Boards functions

It will also develop certifications and qualifications for other professionals including designers, advance treatment installers, and drip installers.

The Board will have nine members, six of whom are on-site wastewater professionals and two who are consumer members and one is from MDE. These members will have geographic distribution. The professional members will include a master installer, master pumper, master operations and maintenance provider, an environmental health officer, and a representative of organizations representing the on-site wastewater industry.

The board will also have the authority to deny, reprimand, suspend or revoke a license through provisions in this bill. It will also have the authority to impose a fine for violations.

Counties retain the ability to adopt more rigorous standards than those imposed by the state board, if they wish.

This will ensure that this industry has the training, continuing education, and standards to ensure that Maryland health and environment are protected. That homeowners and new buyers can be assured that their home is healthy and safe.

Amendments are clarifying and have been worked out with different groups.