

## **4 - SB 516 - EHEA - Environmental Health Specialis**

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Position: FAV



Larry Hogan, Governor · Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor · Dennis R. Schrader, Acting Secretary

**Board of Environmental Health Specialists**  
4201 Patterson Avenue  
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Phone: 410-764-3512

**2021 SESSION  
POSITION PAPER**

**BILL NO: SB 516**  
**COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs**  
**POSITION: Support**

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**TITLE: State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Fees – General Fund**

**BILL ANALYSIS:** This legislation repeals the provision of the law creating the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists fund. In addition, it requires the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists to pay revenues into the General fund of the State.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Board of Environmental Health Specialists (the “Board”) supports SB 516 which includes the transfer of the Board’s funding source from Special fund to General fund.

In FY 2013, based on recommendations from the Department of Legislative Services’ (DLS) 2011 sunset review report, the legislature transferred the Board of Environmental Sanitarians from the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to the Maryland Department of Health (MDH) and renamed the Board as the Board of Environmental Health Specialists. At that time, the Board’s fund source went from the General fund to the Special fund. The funding change was made despite the recommendation of DLS to maintain the Board’s General fund status.

For FY 2018 and FY 2019, the Board accumulated a total deficit of \$67,117. The projected special fund deficit is expected to increase to unsustainable levels in the upcoming fiscal years.

The Board would prefer to not raise existing fees on licensing. Even if the Board considered increasing its fees it would not be practical for this licensing base. The typical licensees are highly trained public-sector employees who earn modest salaries. Unlike other health care providers that typically work in a private practice and can adjust the revenues to make up for increased licensing fees, these licensees have little or no discretion on setting their salaries. The Board believes that a significant fee increase could result in fewer individuals entering the profession and would further add to existing recruitment and retention problems for agencies employing these positions.

By changing its funding from special-funded to General-funded, it would help provide funding to the board, as well as cut costs while not passing on additional costs to licensees. General-funded boards do not pay rent, indirect costs to the Maryland Department of Health, etc. and generally have a lower administrative overhead.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Environmental Health Specialists is respectfully requesting a favorable report on SB 516. For more information, please contact James Merrow, Executive Director Board of Environmental Health Specialists at 410-764-3512 or [james.merrow@maryland.gov](mailto:james.merrow@maryland.gov).

*The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.*

**SB0516-EHE\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Butler, Alex

Position: FAV



**MARYLAND**  
*Association of*  
**COUNTIES**

## Senate Bill 516

### *State Board of Environmental Health Specialists - Fees - General Fund*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Education, Health, and Environmental  
Affairs Committee

Date: February 16, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) SUPPORTS SB 516. The bill would help ensure stable and predictable funding for the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists. The Board is responsible for licensing Local Environmental Health Specialists in the state.

Licensed Environmental Health Specialists in Maryland provide essential services to their communities including oversight of recreation venues, ensuring food safety preparation standards are upheld, and ensuring safe water supply. The Board ensures that these professionals are properly trained and licensed, an underpinning of public trust in their important functions.

The Board has seen rises in ongoing costs associated with licensure and is facing financial challenges. Its special fund status is not self-sustaining and because of its limited membership, this important organization faces undue risk. SB 516 would return the Board's financial support to the General Fund, where it was until 2012. This would provide a higher level of certainty to these professionals, and their service that plays a critical role in ensuring the health and welfare of communities in the state. Accordingly, MACo urges the Committee to issue a **FAVORABLE** report on SB 516.

**SB 516 EHS Board Fees Final 2-16-21.pdf**

Uploaded by: Nixon, Bert

Position: FAV

An Affiliate of  
the Maryland Association  
of Counties, Inc.



Reply to:

February 16, 2021

The Honorable Paul Pinsky, Chair,  
Education, Health and Environmental Affairs Committee  
320 James Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: SB 516 – State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Fees – General Fund

Dear Chair Pinsky and Committee Members:

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (the Conference), along with all Maryland Health Officers as the Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO), **strongly supports SB 516** 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. This past year, EHS's have been at the forefront and on the frontline of addressing key aspects of State and Local Executive Orders regarding COVID-19 compliance measures for safe business operations and responding to thousands of citizen COVID-19 concerns statewide.

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). Back in July 2012, despite the Department of Legislative Services recommendation to keep the Board general funded, the Board was moved to a State Board of Environmental Health Specialists Fund. With a limited membership (approximately 570 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 continues to threaten the Board's existence.

The Conference and MACHO believe 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 SB 516** as written. Companion HB 65 received a unanimous favorable review from Appropriations.

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 240-777-3840.

Respectfully,

Kenneth Welch, President  
Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors