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Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
House Bill 302 Environment – Onsite Wastewater Services – Regulation

Position: **In favor**

Honorable Committee Members,

I am Reed Johnson, Area Sales Manager for Orenco Systems Inc. We are a best available technology (BAT) manufacturer with hundreds of systems installed in the State of Maryland. I am a proud board member of the Maryland Onsite Wastewater Professional Association (MOWPA). As a manufacturer, we understand the importance of education, experience, and accountability. This bill provides for two essential industry needs, training, and accountability. As a concerned board member of MOWPA, I offer full support in the passage of HB 302. As a Maryland (MDE) licensed operator of on-site systems, I offer my full support for HB3 02.

In our industry, our first fiduciary obligation is to the environment. Our other fiduciary duty is to the residences of Maryland and our Nation. Oddly enough, by making the environment first, we are protecting the second. This bill provides the requirements to create a board to regulate professionals in our industry. By creating a board, we can oversee accountability, thereby protecting the new homeowner.

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) wastewater Permits Program (WWPP) completed an audit of over 200 BAT units installed in Maryland. This audit may be made available to you by contacting Travis Sterner, BRF, BAT Section Head at MDE. The review found over 50% of the BAT units not functioning correctly or turned off. Other units had mechanical issues that were never repaired. The Maryland Department of the Environment solution is to require fail-safe requirements whereby the BAT system is turned off, or alarms sewage cannot forward flow into the environment. However, this does not keep sewage from backing up into a home, causing 1000.00's of dollars in damage. We applaud MDE's efforts to provide a mechanical solution. We at Orenco have championed fail safe in our units for decades and believe other manufacturers should follow suit. We believe this is only part of a total solution that is required to protect the environment and the homeowner.

While we, as an industry, cannot protect the homeowner from all failure scenarios, we can minimize failures through fail-safe, standardized design methods, proper installation, regular maintenance, and accountability.

The creation of this Board provides a means for homeowners to express concerns with operators, designers, inspectors, and installers. This Board can offer a method to file grievances should a homeowner believe the work

performed did not meet manufacture or state requirements. Like other professions such as real estate, law practices, and or the medical field, we should have the means to oversee industry professionals, holding them accountable to standards that protect the environment and citizens.

Establishing the State Board of On-Site Wastewater Professionals in the Department of the Environment to regulate individuals who perform on-site wastewater services in the State and to establish minimum standards for individual on-site wastewater systems; requiring a county to enforce and adopt certain criteria related to certain on-site wastewater systems; requiring the Board to set reasonable fees for the issuance and renewal of licenses and other services provided by the Board; establishing the On-Site Wastewater Professionals Fund should be implemented.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Reed Johnson".

Area Sales Manager, Orenco
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Vowra board member
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