



EASTON UTILITIES

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March 3, 2022

To: Chair McIntosh and Members of the Appropriations Committee
Subject: HB 1311: Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses
(Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Lockbox Act of 2022)
Position: Support

Dear Chair McIntosh and Members of the Committee,

Easton Utilities supports the approval of House Bill 1311, Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses (Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund Lockbox Act of 2022), sponsored by Delegate Mautz.

The Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (CBRF) program provides essential funds for the design, construction, and operation of wastewater treatment facilities in Maryland. The CBRF program was implemented in 2004 to achieve Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) level treatment of wastewater generated in Maryland. Easton Utilities was one of the first municipalities in Maryland to participate in this program and commissioned our ENR wastewater treatment facility in 2007.

The total cost to construct this plant was \$38 million (2004 dollars), of which half came from CBRF, with the other half from local sources. The ENR upgrade represents the single most expensive capital project undertaken by the Town of Easton and was not possible without CBRF funding.

Since commissioning in 2007, the Easton water treatment plant has exceeded the ENR program goals of 3 mg/L Total Nitrogen and 0.3 mg/L total Phosphorus. For that achievement, we receive annually through CBRF, an operations and maintenance grant of \$120,000 to support the high cost of operating and maintaining such a complex facility.

Since commissioning, the Easton treatment plant has performed significantly better than specified under ENR standards. For example, the most recent 10-year average effluent Total Nitrogen of 1.55 mg/L and Total Phosphorus of 0.09 mg/L represents a monumental reduction only possible with the continued support of the BRF program. Therefore, the CBRF program facilitates achieving the best possible results for wastewater facilities in the state.

In 2021, the BRF program provided Easton Utilities an additional \$125,353 in Operations and maintenance funding for achieving levels below 3 mg/L Total Nitrogen. We hope that this additional funding will continue and be extended to provide funds for achieving Phosphorus levels below 0.3 mg/l.

While a majority of the 67 Major (>0.5 MGD capacity) treatment facilities in Maryland have been upgraded to achieve ENR through the BRF program, there remain a significant number of Minor (<0.5 MGD capacity) facilities that do not meet ENR standards and will require CBRF money to do so.

Also, there are a significant number of wastewater collection systems (pipes and pumping stations) across the state that require upgrades to prevent accidental discharge of raw sewage into our waterways. These discharges not only pose threats to the environment but are also significant public health hazards.

In short, the job of CBRF is far from complete and is needed to support the continued design, construction, operation, and maintenance of wastewater treatment facilities across Maryland.

Chairman McIntosh, for the reasons above and in the interest of keeping The Chesapeake Bay and surrounding tributaries clean for generations to come, Easton Utilities supports this bill and respectfully requests a Favorable report on HB 1311.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John J. Horner, Jr.", with a stylized, cursive script.

John J. Horner, Jr.

Sr. Vice President & COO

Easton Utilities

410.763-9493

Cc: Hugh Grunden
Steve Ochse