



**Testimony in SUPPORT of HB834- ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEMS – OTREACH AND EDUCATION (SEPTIC AWARENESS ACT OF 2022)**

February 24, 2022  
Environment and Transportation Committee

Dear Chairman Barve and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of HB834** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with over 2,000 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration, and education.

The waterways of the eastern shore have some of the most waterfront throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay and the majority of that waterfront is developed with residential units using septic systems to manage their sewer waste. The unique sandy soils and high water tables on the Eastern Shore leave the waters of this region susceptible to pollution from failing septic systems. Nutrient and bacterial pollution can cause algal blooms, dead zones, or areas closed to swimming or shellfish harvest.

Personally, I became a homeowner with a septic system in Talbot County in 2018. I had very limited knowledge on proper septic maintenance procedures and was not made aware of any particular actions I should take during the property transfer process. Unfortunately, our system quickly became nonfunctioning, threatening our own and our pet's health as well as the local environment. I could have avoided those consequences if septic outreach and education were prioritized more, especially during property transfer.

ShoreRivers looks forward to being able to share Department education materials and resources during SepticSmart Week with our membership and community members to promote community awareness regarding certain aspects and impacts of on-site sewage disposal systems. ShoreRivers is a strong proponent for policies that help to address pollution coming from septic systems. For the reason and the examples described above, ShoreRivers urges the committee to adopt **House Bill 834**.

For these reasons stated above, ShoreRivers urges the Committee to adopt a **FAVORABLE** report on **HB834**.

Sincerely,

Elle Bassett  
Miles-Wye Riverkeeper, on behalf of:

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**ShoreRivers**

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director  
Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper  
Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

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