

**KATIE FRY HESTER**  
*Legislative District 9*  
Carroll and Howard Counties

Education, Health, and  
Environmental Affairs Committee

Chair, Joint Committee on  
Cybersecurity, Information Technology  
and Biotechnology



*Annapolis Office*  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 304  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3671 · 301-858-3671  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3671  
KatieFry.Hester@senate.state.md.us

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

**Testimony in support of SB479 - Environment – On- Site Wastewater Services - Regulation**

February 24th, 2022

Chairman Pinsky, Vice Chair Kagan, and members of the Committee, thank you for your consideration of SB479, which will establish a licensing board for on-site wastewater professionals. This is a reintroduction of last year's HB302, which the committee heard from Del. Stein.

As this committee knows, septic systems are the most expensive appliance for 420,000 Maryland homes and, since they're underground, problems with design, installation, and maintenance can hide for years at a time. Given the cost and importance of these systems to our public health and environment, it is critical that the people who design, install, maintain, and repair them are properly trained and able to surpass basic certification measures by the state.

This bill follows years of collaboration between septic system professionals, environmental organizations, and MDE. The purpose of the bill remains the same as last year, but a few minor changes have been made as a result of our interim work. The Board's composition has been simplified to nine members - six of whom are septic professionals, two consumer representatives, and a non-voting representative from MDE. It will have the same authorities as our licensing boards for plumbers, electricians, and other home construction trades. Of course, counties may adopt more rigorous standards than those imposed by the state board.

It's time that the same level of consumer protection and professional licensing required for other trades be applied to the septic industry. For the reasons outlined above, **I respectfully request a favorable report from the committee.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Katie Fry Hester".

Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Carroll and Howard Counties