

## Testimony on HB318 and SB479

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Bill Reference Number: HB318 and SB479 Environment – Onsite Wastewater Services – Regulation

Position on Bill: Favorable

I am a statewide Water Quality Specialist with University of Maryland Extension providing septic and private well education primarily to homeowners. In 2021 I worked with Senator Hester's office in surveying and determining how other states oversee the onsite wastewater industry. 35 states require state licensing for some, or all sectors of the septic industry, all states have some level of certification requirements, and six states (AL, MS, NC, NH, and VA) have state onsite licensing boards. We surveyed and interviewed the states with licensing boards (full report attached) to identify: a) reasons for establishing a board; b) board function; c) what would they included in the board's duties; and d) what recommendations for other considering a board.

a) Reasons for the board included: establishing minimum standards/qualifications for onsite professionals (63%); provide oversight of onsite professionals (63%); establish enforcement of standards and ethical conduct (50%); and provide a licensing and certification mechanism (37%).

b) Board functions included: license and regulate onsite professionals; establish minimum standards of knowledge and experience to ensure competency and ethical conduct; protect environmental and public health; establish training and certification; provide appropriate enforcement procedures

c) What would they include: have greater capacity to take action against licensees operating unethically; standard permit and other forms; and include time of sale Inspector certification.

d) What recommendations do they have for others: include stronger regulations on the inspection process; work with related industry groups; make certification process user friendly; a board on 9-11 members with heavy industry representation; include hands-on training for onsite professionals.