

Testimony on HB834

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Bill Reference Number: HB384 – Onsite Sewage Disposal Systems – Outreach and Education

Position on Bill: Informational

I am a statewide Water Quality Specialist with University of Maryland Extension providing septic and private well education primarily to homeowners. The majority of homeowners with septic systems typically do not understand their system and the recommended maintenance practices, and unfortunately seek help when a system malfunction arises. These system malfunctions or failures can pose a serious public health and environmental quality risk, and can result in a significant repair or replacement cost to the homeowner. Some of these malfunctions can be either avoided, or delayed by proper system maintenance. Therefore, education of homeowners is essential, but is also challenging, since systems are typically out of sight and not thought about.

Establishing a dedicated Septic Smart Week, requiring MDE to provide EPA Septic Smart educational materials, and supplying this information at property transfer as this bill does, can provide helpful septic awareness opportunities. The EPA Septic Smart website and varied educational materials (videos, factsheets, flyers, etc.) are of high quality and homeowner friendly. This bill can serve as an important opportunity to enhance education of homeowners on proper septic system maintenance as a key means to protect environmental and public health, as well as help save homeowners money.