



THE MARYLAND HOUSE OF DELEGATES
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401

February 25, 2022

HB 834 – Septic Awareness Act of 2022

Chair Barve, Vice Chair Stein, Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee:

HB 834 helps to raise septic awareness by establishing SepticSmart Week in connection with the EPA's established SepticSmart Week¹, and by requiring that new homeowners who are buying a residence with a septic system be provided with certain materials from the EPA.

In 2019, this Committee and the full House passed Montgomery County local bills HB 202 and HB 562. They stalled in the Senate due to a concern that they would result in multiple local bills. As a result, before you today, is a statewide bill.

According to the Maryland Department of Environment, approximately 2.2 million Maryland households - roughly 20% of Maryland households – are on septic. In Montgomery County alone, approximately 20,000 properties are on septic. Ensuring that homeowners and homebuyers are educated on proper septic usage and care is important for both homeowners and the environment.

Currently, nine states have legislatively adopted SepticSmart Week: Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, North Carolina, Virginia, Washington, and Oklahoma. States have taken a variety of clever measures to raise awareness of septic issues.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/septic/septic-systems-outreach-toolkit>

In 2021:

- Officials in New Hampshire took a life-sized cardboard cutout of Septic Sam (see below) around the state;
- Officials in Ohio led an in-person outreach and education event at a library;
- Officials in Wisconsin hosted a series of webinars for homeowners to learn more about septic systems and how to avoid damage and costly repairs.

This bill will promote septic awareness in alignment with national and state initiatives. Increased awareness of septic system usage and care improves efficiency in water usage, proper disposal of hazardous materials, and proper care of drains to avoid costly repairs. Ultimately, HB 834 will aid in ensuring clean water and a cleaner environment for Marylanders.

There is an amendment in your file to align the bill with what was passed in 2019.

For the foregoing reasons, I respectfully request a favorable report on HB 834.

