



House Bill 834- Septic Awareness Act of 2022

Position: Favorable with Amendment

Maryland REALTORS® believe adding Maryland to the National Septic Smart Week to educate both homeowners and communities on safety and proper care of septic systems is another positive tool of education for current and future property owners to utilize. Failure to maintain and service a home's septic system correctly can lead to expensive homeowner repairs. During the 2021 national initiative, 17 new proclamations were issued by the program managed by the Environmental Protection Agency and 9 states also signed on.

HB 834 also requires three handouts by a “vendor of residential real estate.” The REALTORS® suggest that providing the Homeowner’s Brochure would be better than requiring all three handouts. The brochure covers the information provided in the more detailed Homeowners guide in a shorter and more easily read format. With most real estate contracts now averaging over 50 pages, requiring a shorter and more easily read document is important if purchasers are going to read it. Moreover, the brochure includes a website address that links to more detailed information on septic systems.

Finally, the brochure (along with the other documents) is also currently available on the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) website. This information can be accessed electronically as well by purchasers.

<https://mde.maryland.gov/programs/Water/wwp/Pages/SepticSmart.aspx>

With these changes, the REALTORS® request a favorable report.

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REALTOR® Amendment to HB 834 – On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems – Outreach and Education

On page 3, strike lines 22-28 and substitute:

(B) BEFORE SETTLEMENT OF IMPROVED RESIDENTIAL REAL ESTATE SERVED BY AN ON-SITE SEWAGE DISPOSAL SYSTEM, A VENDOR SHALL DELIVER TO THE PURCHASER A COPY OF THE U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY’S NEW HOMEBUYER’S BROCHURE TO SEPTIC SYSTEMS

RATIONALE: The amendment seeks to make two changes. First, it requires delivery of the septic information before settlement to ensure that the information is given out even in cases where a seller fails to initially provide the disclosure. Second, the amendment requires only the disclosure of the two-page EPA Septic brochure. This brochure contains the information of the Septic guide but in a more easily readable form. With contracts over 50 pages long, keeping the information shorter and more approachable will improve its chances of being read.