



# Maryland

## Department of the Environment

Larry Hogan, Governor  
Boyd K. Rutherford, Lt. Governor

Ben Grumbles, Secretary  
Horacio Tablada, Deputy Secretary

February 23, 2022

The Honorable Kumar P. Barve, Chair  
Environment and Transportation and Economic Matters  
House Office Building, Room 251  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**Re: House Bill 649 – Environment – Discharge Permits – Inspections and Administrative Continuations**

Dear Chair Barve and Members of the Committee:

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or the Department) has reviewed HB 649, *Environment – Discharge Permits – Inspections and Administrative Continuations*, and would like to share some information regarding this legislation. MDE also wanted to note that we are currently working with the sponsors and interested parties to amend the language of the bill.

HB 649 would limit the period in which discharge permits may be administratively continued, establish new inspection, and administrative penalty provisions for certain facilities operating under a discharge permit, and impose new reporting and personnel requirements for MDE's discharge permitting programs.

Reducing the number of administratively extended water discharge permits is a top priority for the Secretary. Currently, the Water and Science Administration has 196 individual discharge permits that are administratively extended and the Land and Material Administration currently has 16 individual discharge permits that are administratively extended. The Department is committed to reducing the backlog of individual discharge permits to 10% or less within the next 12 months.

As part of this plan, the Department is reviewing each of the administratively extended permits to determine appropriate actions. Additionally, the Department is in the process of reviewing and validating its permit tracking database. In 2021, MDE upgraded to a new system and as a result, we have found many duplications. Corrections are expected to be completed within the next 60 days, potentially reducing the number of administratively extended permits. MDE has also worked with several non-governmental organizations to develop a ranking system to prioritize permits.

Thank you for considering the Department's information regarding this legislation. We will continue to monitor HB 649 during the committee's deliberations, and I am available to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to contact me at 410-260-6301 or [tyler.abbott@maryland.gov](mailto:tyler.abbott@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tyler Abbott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the beginning and a large loop at the end.

Tyler Abbott

cc: The Honorable Sarah Love  
Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration