



DATE: March 6, 2023
TO: Members, House Environment and Transportation Committee
FROM: Wicomico Environmental Trust
RE: HB 1003 – Wicomico County – Seasonal Restaurants – Potable Running Water and Graywater

The Wicomico Environmental Trust (WET) **OPPOSES HB 1003** regarding Wicomico County – Seasonal Restaurants – Potable Running Water and Graywater.

We oppose this bill because, like its 2022 predecessor, it proposes exceptions to important public and environmental health laws and raises similar concerns. An earlier version of HB 1003 was recently considered on short notice and endorsed by a majority of the Wicomico County Council, notably without the benefit of participation by the County Health Department. WET submits that this Committee made the right judgment last year.

As currently drafted, the bill continues to propose a special definition of *graywater* that is inconsistent with the current statewide protections of Article – Environment §9-1112. In addition, although the bill is now captioned *Potable Running Water*, we understand that it would, in fact, allow the covered restaurant(s) to provide patrons with non-running water from a cistern for handwashing, in contravention of current state health laws and regulations designed to minimize the risk of waterborne illness.

The application of this bill has now been restricted to Wicomico County, making it even clearer that HB 1003 is designed to serve a special interest, a major local political donor. However, this restriction in scope does not address any of the underlying concerns. Approval of this bill would put our public and environmental health at risk, permit the proliferation of food service facilities and bars in inappropriate locations throughout the County, and inspire similar demands throughout the State.

This said, we were encouraged to hear suggestions at the recent Senate hearing on SB 778 that the proprietors of the Wicomico County bar in question have been discussing with the Maryland Departments of Health and the Environment potential alternatives that might address the environmental health issues they had identified. Such measures would be a welcome and positive step that could enable WET to support the reopening of this valued local business.

Otherwise, we respectfully ask that the Committee give an **UNFAVORABLE** report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Madeleine B. Adams".

Madeleine Adams
President

madeleine@wicomicoenvironment.org

The Wicomico Environmental Trust champions a healthy environment for all.

The Wicomico Environmental Trust is a public charity recognized as tax exempt by the IRS under Section 501(c)(3). A copy of the current financial statement of Wicomico Environmental Trust, Ltd., is available by writing to WET, P.O. Box 2311, Salisbury, MD 21802. Documents and information submitted under the Maryland Solicitations Act are also available, for the cost of postage and copies, from the Maryland Secretary of State, State House, Annapolis, MD 21401, (410) 974-5534.