

# Gene von Gunten

## TESTIMONY

### House Bill 831- Environment – Septic Systems – Online Database

#### In Favor

My name is Gene von Gunten. I live near Westminster, MD; and I am retired after 38 years as a Registered Sanitarian with the Frederick County Health Department and the Montgomery County Department of Permitting Services. I would like to testify in favor of House Bill 831, Septic Systems Database.

At Montgomery County, I presided over the project to image all existing septic and water well records; and make that data available to the public via the internet.

These records are public, and they must be readily available to the homeowner, septic service companies, and real estate professionals. However, only three Maryland counties (Montgomery, Howard, Baltimore) have imaged their records; and only two counties (Montgomery, Howard) have made these records accessible. In addition, this data is critical for environmental planning and assessment.

Most Maryland County Health Departments recognize the need to make these records digital and accessible. None of these counties have the resources to complete this mission. This legislation will bring the resources and expertise of the State of MD (MDE) and a workgroup of septic professionals to bear on this task.

Without the direction and support of the Maryland Legislature this critical task will never be fulfilled.