



Affiliates of
The Maryland Association of Counties, Inc.

Date: March 29, 2024
To: Members of the Senate Education, Energy and The Environment Committee
From: Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors
Maryland Association of County Health Officers (MACHO)
Re: HB 1512 - Bay Restoration Fund - Use of Funds - Municipal Wastewater Facilities - Sunset Repeal

The Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors (Conference), an affiliate of the Maryland Association of Counties (MACo), **SUPPORTS HB 1512**. In addition, the Maryland Association of Health Officers, (MACHO), the association of the state's twenty-four Health Officers who oversee the local environmental health programs in their local health departments, also a MACo affiliate, joins the Conference in **SUPPORT of HB 1512**. The Health Officers are the appointing authority for the program at the local level.

HB 1512 repeals the June 30, 2024, sunset of the Bay Restoration Act. This repeal allows the current criteria and use of the Bay Restoration Act to remain in place. The Bay Restoration Act is utilized to fund and install Best Available Technology Nitrogen Reducing Units (BAT) on on-site sewage disposal systems, with priority given to failing systems in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Critical Area. In addition, it allows connecting a property using an on-site sewage disposal system to an existing wastewater facility achieving enhanced nutrient removal. These are critical tools for both property owners and LHDs.

The BAT systems installed under the Bay Restoration Act have reduced nitrogen to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed and improved water quality. The Chesapeake Bay is the most valuable resource to the State of Maryland providing a huge economic impact to our State. It provides income to commercial fishermen and crabbers, a place for recreational boating and swimming, as well as increased property values for properties along the Bay and connecting rivers. Keeping the Bay Restoration Act as it is currently will only further enhance and increase the value of the Chesapeake Bay.

Accordingly, we ask the committee to give HB 1512 a Favorable vote.

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