

# **SB222 Letter of Support.pdf**

Uploaded by: Donald Curtian

Position: FAV



An Affiliate of  
The Maryland Association of Counties, Inc.

To: Members of the Finance Committee

From: Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors

Maryland Association of Health Officers

Re: Senate Bill 222, State Board of Environmental Health Specialists- Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships

The Maryland Department of Local Environmental Health Directors (Conference), an affiliate of The Maryland Association of Counties, **SUPPORTS SB222**. 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 **SUPPORTS SB222**.

This Bill will allow the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists (Board) to recognize an apprenticeship. In recent years there has been a depletion in the number of licensed environmental health specialists that provide the workforce at local health departments as well as at the Maryland Department of Health and the Maryland Department of the Environment. The workforce issues have led to backlogs and extension to times to review and approve permits in some counties. The environmental health specialists are responsible for food inspections, well and septic system review, approval and inspections, pet store inspections, zoonotic disease control, sampling of local beaches, swimming pool inspections, camp inspections, mobile home park inspections as well as other programs that protect public health. The Board being able to recognize an apprenticeship program would start to build a future career path for

students that would be interested in the environmental health field. This would build up the workforce and fill vacancies that are needed at local health departments and at state agencies. Working with accredited colleges and universities an apprenticeship program in an approved baccalaureate program could be established and recognized by the Board.

Accordingly, we ask the committee to give SB222 a **Favorable** vote.

Contact: Don Curtian, President, Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors, Phone: 410-222-7050,

[hdcurti@aacounty.org](mailto:hdcurti@aacounty.org)

Ruth Maiorana, Executive Director, Maryland Association of County Health Officers, Phone: 410-937-1433

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**4a - SB 222 - FIN - MDH - LOS (1).pdf**

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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle  
Chair, Finance Committee  
3 East Miller Senate Office Building  
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

### **RE: SB 222 – State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships – Letter of Support**

Dear Chair Beidle:

The Maryland Department of Health respectfully submits this letter of support for SB 222 – State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships. SB 222 amends the Health Occupations Article by defining and adding qualifications for an apprenticeship program, which prepares apprentices to qualify for the licensing examination administered by the Board of Environmental Health Specialists. It also authorizes the Board to adopt regulations defining the requirements for Board approval of an apprenticeship, and the minimum and maximum duration of an apprenticeship.

SB 222 addresses a critical workforce need in the State. For years, local health departments across Maryland have faced a shortage of qualified environmental health specialists. These highly trained and skilled professionals protect the health and safety of all Marylanders as the officials responsible for food safety, drinking water safety, and other environmental health programs. These essential public health workers are critical for business and economic development as the ones responsible for reviewing and inspecting wells and septic systems for local health departments.

There is currently no training pipeline for environmental health workers in the State. In response, the Department is working to create an apprenticeship program along with the Board of Environmental Health Specialists. SB 222 authorizes the Board to create new regulations for apprenticeships and for the minimum and maximum duration of apprenticeships, ensuring that apprentices participating in the program will be qualified to sit for the licensing examination.

The Department strongly supports the passage of SB 222. If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at [sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov](mailto:sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Laura Scott". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Laura" and the last name "Scott" clearly distinguishable.

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.  
Secretary

**MDE SB222 SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Les Knapp

Position: FAV



**The Maryland Department of the Environment**  
**Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 222***

***State Board of Environmental Health Specialists - Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships***

**Position:** Support

**Committee:** Finance

**Date:** January 30, 2024

**From:** Leslie Knapp, Jr.

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** SB 222. The bill removes a potential hurdle to hiring environmental health specialists.

**Bill Summary**

Senate Bill 222 provides that an applicant seeking licensure as an environmental health specialist may complete an apprenticeship approved by the State Board of Environmental Health Specialists (Board) in lieu of an environmental health specialist-in-training program. The Board must adopt regulations establishing the approval requirements of an apprenticeship and the minimum and maximum duration of an apprenticeship. The bill clarifies that individuals participating in the environmental health specialist-in-training program or an apprenticeship program are not subject to environmental health specialist licensure requirements during the time of participation. Currently, the Board administers license examinations. The bill would authorize the Board to approve a third-party examination provider to administer the examination. Finally, the bill also clarifies that a majority of the appointed members of the Board constitutes a quorum.

**Position Rationale**

Environmental health specialists provide critical public services, including well and septic system permit approvals, food safety inspections, and public swimming pool and campground inspections. Currently, there is a shortage of individuals entering the environmental health field and this has posed a challenge to some local jurisdictions in providing these important services in a timely and effective manner. One identified challenge is that environmental health applicants seeking licensure in Maryland must obtain 12 months of experience in an environmental health specialist-in-training program. The bill would offer an alternative pathway by allowing for an applicant to participate in approved apprenticeship that is part of the requirements of a Board-approved baccalaureate degree from an accredited college or university. Doing an apprenticeship during the undergraduate process is typically easier than trying to obtain 12 months of experience in-training after graduation. For the reasons detailed above, MDE urges a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 222.

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**Contact:** Les Knapp, Government Relations Director  
Cell: 410-453-2611, Email: [les.knapp@maryland.gov](mailto:les.knapp@maryland.gov)



**4b - SB 222 - FIN- Board - LOS.pdf**

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Position: FAV



## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

Board of Environmental Health Specialists  
4201 Patterson Ave  
Baltimore, MD 21215

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### 2024 SESSION POSITION PAPER

**BILL NO:** SB 222  
**COMMITTEE:** Finance  
**POSITION:** Support

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**TITLE:** State Board of Environmental Health Specialists – Quorum, Examinations, and Apprenticeships

**BILL ANALYSIS:** This proposed legislation clarifies what constitutes a quorum to conduct Board business. It also gives the Board the authority to accept an approved apprenticeship program as an alternative to the experience requirement for an individual to be licensed. Additionally, it provides the Board with the authority to approve an examination provider to administer the licensing examination.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:** The Board of Environmental Health Specialists (the “Board”) supports SB 222.

This legislation provides the Board with some administrative flexibilities in conducting its operations in a streamlined manner (e.g. defining the board’s quorum and providing for the administration of the licensing examinations). In addition, SB 222 would provide the Board with the authority to accept approved apprenticeship programs. This authority will allow educational institutions to utilize and create a pathway for degree seeking students to gain not only the educational requirements, but also on-the-job-work needed to put graduates on a fast track to becoming Licensed Environmental Health Specialists (LEHS). Adding this provision to the Board’s statute is seen as an additional recruitment incentive for new hires and a benefit to agencies employing LEHS. It will enable an apprentice to practice under the supervision of a fully licensed specialist while obtaining the necessary education for licensure. Under the current statute, the Board is unable to recognize nor approve an apprentice program as a pathway for licensure. Currently, the required experience can only be obtained after a degree is conferred.

Thank you for considering this testimony. The Board of Environmental Health Specialists is requesting a favorable report on SB 222.

If you require additional information, please contact Matthew Cumers, Board Chair at 410-535-3922 or at [matthew.cumers@maryland.gov](mailto:matthew.cumers@maryland.gov); or James Merrow, Executive Director, at 410-764-3512 or at [james.merrow@maryland.gov](mailto:james.merrow@maryland.gov).

*The opinion of the Board expressed in this document does not necessarily reflect that of the Department of Health or the Administration.*

**SB0222-FIN\_MACo\_SUP.pdf**

Uploaded by: Sarah Sample

Position: FAV



## **Senate Bill 222**

*State Board of Environmental Health Specialists –  
Quorum, Examination, and Apprenticeships*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Finance Committee

Date: January 30, 2024

From: Sarah Sample

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** SB 222. This bill was wisely developed in collaboration with the Board of Environmental Health Specialists and includes insights from the Conference of Environmental Health Directors. As such, it should help accelerate the integration of entry-level Environmental Health Specialists into local departments, clarify procedures for the Board of Environmental Health Specialists, and streamline the examination process for licensure.

Environmental Health Specialists are needed every day in every jurisdiction to make sure communities have the appropriate resources to stay healthy and thriving. Their role includes ensuring the safety of life's essentials - food, water, and habitat. Unfortunately, workforce shortages in this field are creating precarious circumstances for these divisions locally, but the provisions in this bill have the potential to alleviate some of that strain. The bill does this by getting skilled workers on the job faster. The apprenticeship specifically will help eager, qualified employees hit the ground running in all counties to make sure crucial services are not interrupted and local teams can fill vacancies with greater speed.

By collaboratively streamlining the system that supports these roles, Environmental Health Departments across the state will have more tools at their disposal to fill vacant positions. For these reasons, MACo **SUPPORTS** SB 222 and urges a **FAVORABLE** report.