



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 250

Department of the Environment - Fees, Penalties, Funding, and Regulation

Date: February 11, 2025

To: Education, Energy, and Environment Committee

Position:

FAVORABLE

From:

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Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS** SB 250, which authorizes the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) to alter various fees for programs and services provided by the Department. As the State begins to weather a period of fiscal uncertainty, it is increasingly important that MDE's fees are evaluated in a way that is both environmentally and fiscally sustainable.

The complete package of fees included in Sb 250 is carefully curated and share a common theme of putting the burden of increased program costs on the users of the programs. This is a responsible approach that encourages greater compliance with State laws and regulations. Some of the bill provisions that will have a positive impact on water quality in the state include:

Well and Septic Permit Application Fees:

Currently, most well and septic permitting is carried out by local health departments and county governments who charge a fee to process the permit. Their authority to do so is delegated from MDE. MDE does not have the same ability to charge for this service in instances where they have either rescinded or been given back responsibility for processing these permits.

This enabling change will ensure there are sufficient resources available to run the permitting program, which helps ensure septic systems are not contributing to Bay pollution.

Responsible Personnel Training Program Certification:

Construction activity continues to be a major contributor to nutrient loads in the Bay. This program ensures that larger construction projects have a responsible person on site to manage erosion, sediment, and runoff issues. Peer jurisdictions charge a fee for similar training programs. Giving MDE the ability to levy a fee commensurate with the cost of the certification program will ensure there is sufficient training and oversight of construction sites and, ultimately, help reduce nutrient runoff in local waterways.

Wetlands and Waterways Application Fees:

Fees for wetlands and waterways applications were last meaningfully updated in 2012. These funds support the wetlands and waterways permit review process as well as general management, conservation, protections, and preservation of Maryland's waterways.

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With over 200,000 members and e-subscribers, including 71,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Chesapeake and its resources.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 250.

For more information, please contact Matt Stegman, Maryland Staff Attorney, at mstegman@cbf.org.