



## **HB24: Bay Restoration Fund - Authorized Uses - Connection to Existing Municipal Wastewater Facility**

House Environment & Transportation Committee

February 5, 2025

Position: Oppose

Arundel Rivers Federation, Clean Water Action, and ShoreRivers appreciate the need that has led to HB 24, but must respectfully oppose this proposed solution.

All across Maryland, there are neighborhoods that are on failing septic systems that desperately need addressing. These septic hotspots are oftentimes in areas that would not be approved for a septic system today, due to proximity to sensitive features, small lots, and poor soils.

The state needs to figure out what to do with these hot spots, whether that be connection to a wastewater treatment plant, creating community septic, or other solutions that may be applicable.

However, we cannot support the precedent that more sewer lines will be connected to a non-compliant wastewater treatment plant. This could set a dangerous precedent that could threaten both our local environment and human health. This committee recently heard during the State of the Bay briefing that nitrogen loading actually saw millions of pounds of nitrogen increase in 2021 and 2022 due specifically to significant non-compliance at several large municipal WWTPs including Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant. This bill as drafted contains no guardrails for which WWTPs can receive added loads, potentially greenlighting additional nutrient loading to enter the Chesapeake Bay from non-compliance WWTPs.

While we understand the intent of HB24 and the need to address failing septic system communities within the state, solving the immediate problem for one community would cause problems for others and create more, long term problems.

For this reason, we oppose HB 24.

Sincerely,

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