



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

House Bill 24

Bay Restoration Fund – Authorized Uses – Connection to Existing Municipal Wastewater Facility

Date: February 5, 2025

To: Environment & Transportation Committee

Position: **UNFAVORABLE**

From: Gussie Maguire,
MD Staff Scientist

Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **OPPOSES** HB 24, which extends use of the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) to include connecting septic users to any existing wastewater treatment facility, regardless of that facility's caliber of nutrient removal technology. Whatever circumstance this bill is intended to address, passage would set a precedent that would risk oversubscribing the BRF and leaving the state short of resources to continue upgrading and maintaining wastewater treatment infrastructure.

The BRF collects fees from sewer and septic system users to pay, in whole or in part, for practices that reduce nutrient pollution in the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays. Projects may include: updating major and minor wastewater treatment facilities, updating failing and outdated septic systems to those with the best available nutrient removal technology, investing in community sewerage treatment facilities to replace multiple individual septic systems, and connecting properties to existing municipal wastewater treatment facilities that are achieving high levels of nutrient removal. Critically, these practices result in a higher level of wastewater treatment and a net decrease of nutrient pollution in the state's waterways.

Under this bill, an individual with a properly designed, maintained, and functioning septic system would be able to request funding to instead connect to a wastewater treatment plant that may not meet modern treatment standards. The Bay Restoration Fund has been a tremendously effective tool to reduce nutrient pollution through investment in more effective wastewater treatment practices. As technology continues to evolve and existing systems age, it is critical to maintain the availability and effectiveness of the BRF to deal with the most critical needs.

CBF urges the Committee's UNFAVORABLE report on HB 24.

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

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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.