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Information Only for HB747 - Environment - On-Site Wastewater Systems - Requirements for Inspection and Pumping Services

Education Energy and Environment Committee,

My name is Eddie Harrison, I am the legislative liaison representing MOWPA (Maryland Onsite Wastewater Professionals Association). MOWPA represents all Maryland professionals in the Onsite Industry. Our membership includes: Installers, Pumpers, Engineers, Property Transfer Inspectors, Operation and Maintenance Providers, and Code Officials.

I represent MOWPA as an un-compensated Legislative Liaison, current Vice-President, and former Board President.

My day job is the owner of BAT Onsite, LLC. BAT Onsite, LLC., is primarily an Operation and Maintenance Provider for automated Onsite Wastewater Systems. Including: Advanced Treatment units (including BAT), pump systems, mound systems, drip dispersal systems, and pretty much any Onsite Wastewater System that requires electrical/mechanical operation under 5,000 gallons per day. I am currently servicing close to 1,000 units, covering the whole State of Maryland. I have been working in the Onsite Wastewater Industry as an installer, pumper, designer, property transfer inspector, and operation and maintenance provider since 1984.

Statement

MOWPA must take an “Information Only” position on HB747 as our diverse group of business owners and regulators have different perspectives regarding the government mandating Pumping Septic Tanks and Property Transfer Inspections at every change of ownership or change in occupancy for rentals.

I want to thank the Sponsor, Team Septic, the Realtors, and other advocates for amending this Bill to allow exceptions to these Inspections and Pumpouts. We have had lots of offline discussions and a conference call to hear all concerns and come up with an agreeable compromise.

Our diverse membership includes business owners and professionals in the private sector from Waste Haulers, Inspectors, Installers to Designers and Technology Vendors. We also have Public Sector members including State and Local Code Officials. To come to a definitive consensus on legislation of this nature is improbable.

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It is understood by our membership that the purpose of this piece of legislation is to locate and identify failing Septic Systems to protect the environment, public health and the consumer. The main comments against HB747 are as follows:

- A private, negotiated, legal, transaction of real property, between two parties, should not be interfered with by the government.
- The mandatory requirement of a property inspection can create a negative impact on the free trade of real property (Rental or purchased) due to the cost of these services. (Rent of affordable homes will have to increase to absorb this cost)

Today the menial cost of a properly executed Property Transfer Inspection can be between \$800 and \$1,200 (Dependent on whether a pumpout is done during inspection). There is a movement within the industry to make these inspections even more comprehensive than they are today. It is my opinion these inspections can grow to reach \$2,000 to \$3,000.

On the other hand, some of our membership recognize the value of this piece of legislation:

- Consumer protection: buyers have some assurances that their system won't fail soon after they move in and cost from \$9K to \$70K to replace the whole system.
- Protecting public health and the environment by identifying currently failing septic systems and getting them repaired.

There are many other arguments to be considered in both directions.

Conclusion

MOWPA, as a group, would have come out Unfavorable, prior to the negotiated amendments to include exceptions to when a Property Transfer Inspection would be required. As it is currently proposed, we can take a neutral position and rely on the Legislature to come to fair outcome for the citizens of Maryland and the environment. **We submit this testimony for Information Only.**

Thank you for your time
Eddie Harrison
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