



**Testimony in Support of House Bill 747- Environment - On-Site Wastewater Systems - Requirements for Inspection and Pumping Services**

**House Environment and Transportation Committee: February 19, 2024**

February 17, 2025

Dear Chairman Korman and members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB74** on behalf of ShoreRivers. ShoreRivers is a river protection group on Maryland's Eastern Shore with over 2,500 members. Our mission is to protect and restore our Eastern Shore waterways through science-based advocacy, restoration and education.

As a riverkeeper, I research and collect water quality data including nitrogen, phosphorus, and fecal enterococci bacteria levels and communicate it to communities within my watershed. I am committed to providing this information so that individuals and families can make informed decisions about swimming or recreating in their local waterways. **Fecal enterococci, which can result from failing septic systems, can be a barrier for clean water and water recreation opportunities.**

As an advocate for the Chester River, I work primarily with the residents of Kent and Queen Anne's County, two of the most agricultural counties in Maryland. Their intensely rural landscapes and sparsely set subdivisions mean that large percentages of the population are not connected to town utilities, and are reliant on septics. Many residents have never tested their septic system leaving them and future residents at risk of coliform bacteria, harmful nitrates, and phosphates leaching at elevated rates into the environment. There are many circumstances where this pollution becomes a human health hazard for the home owner or the local community.

**Requiring MDE to establish regular septic inspection protocols will provide residents with the assurance that their system is fully functional, and it will ensure our rivers are cleaner and more swimmable for future generations.** We thank Delegate Guyton for bringing forward this legislation, and ShoreRivers urges the committee to adopt **House Bill 747**.

Sincerely,  
**Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper** on behalf of:

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***ShoreRivers***

Isabel Hardesty, Executive Director

Annie Richards, Chester Riverkeeper | Matt Pluta, Choptank Riverkeeper

Elle Bassett, Miles-Wye Riverkeeper | Zack Kelleher, Sassafras Riverkeeper

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