



**The Maryland Department of the Environment  
Secretary Serena McIlwain**

***Senate Bill 165  
Environment – On-Site Wastewater Systems – Requirements for Inspection and Pumping  
Services and Implementation Dates***

**Position:** Support  
**Committee:** Education, Energy, and the Environment  
**Date:** February 3, 2026  
**From:** Alex Butler, Deputy Director of Government Relations

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The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) **SUPPORTS** SB 165.

**Bill Summary**

Senate Bill 165 proposes new inspection and pump-out requirements for septic systems during certain property transfers or rental tenant changes. These inspections and pump-outs are good for 3 years and do not have to be repeated again within that time frame.

The bill also extends the time period for MDE to adopt regulations relating to licensing requirements for individuals who provide on-site wastewater services (septic installers, designers, haulers, *etc.*) to 2027 and for the State Board of On-Site Water Professionals (Board) to license individuals who provide on-site wastewater services to 2028.

**Position Rationale**

A septic system is typically the most expensive appliance in a home. The bill's inspection and pumping requirements are a reasonable and practical way to protect homebuyers and renters, ensure on-site wastewater systems are functioning properly, and protect water quality.

Regarding the regulation and licensing extensions, the Board was created by HB 318 of 2022, which also required: (1) MDE, in consultation with the Board, to adopt licensing requirements for individuals who perform on-site wastewater services by July 1, 2025; and (2) for individuals who perform on-site wastewater services to be licensed by the Board by July 1, 2026. However, the Board was not fully seated until 2024 due to legislation revising the Board's membership in 2023 (HB 30/SB 7) and need for Senate confirmation for many of the members, which occurred during the 2024 Session. Given the two year delay in seating the Board, MDE believes an equivalent 2 year extension for the regulations and licensing is appropriate.

For the reasons detailed above MDE asks for a **FAVORABLE** report for SB 165.

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