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House Environment and Transportation Committee
250 Taylor House Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Chair Korman and members of the House Environment & Transportation Committee:

I am writing today to formally express my strong support for HB 1424, which seeks to allow homeowners' associations to serve as the controlling authority for certain privately owned and maintained minor sewage systems. This legislation is a necessary step in ensuring that the homeowners' associations are responsible and accountable for their own minor sewage systems and does not force the County to assume a localized infrastructure liability that was never built or maintained by the County and is well outside the County's sewer service areas.

This bill is narrowly focused on one system in Anne Arundel County. The historical context of this project underscores the necessity for legislative relief. From the outset, there were significant concerns raised about its long-term sustainability, accompanied by attempts to prevent its establishment. Despite these reservations, the project proceeded with an understanding that a designated entity would handle ongoing maintenance and oversight. Now, after years of operation and ongoing disputes between private parties that have nothing to do with the County, there has been an attempt to shift responsibility and liability of the system to the County. This shift disregards the initial efforts to halt the project's implementation and imposes an unwarranted strain on local resources and utility ratepayers.

Passing HB 1424 will ensure that the County is not held accountable for a private utility it never sanctioned and does not wish to control. It is a matter of basic fairness that the entities which designed, built, and committed to maintaining the privately owned plant remain the responsible parties, rather than offloading the operational and financial risks onto the County utility rate payers. This bill provides a common-sense solution to a unique administrative problem without setting a broad or disruptive precedent. For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Committee to issue a favorable report on HB 1424.

Sincerely,

Karen Henry /s/
Director

cc: Members of the House Environment and Transportation Committee