



## **SB479 - On-Site Wastewater Services - Regulation**

House Environment and Transportation Committee

February 24, 2022

### **Position: Favorable**

Dear Chairman Pinsky and Members of the Committee,

Septic systems are complicated, vital systems that play a crucial role in the health and wellbeing of not only our waterways, but also people. As Maryland continues to grow, our understanding of soil types and processes expands, and our rain events intensify, it is important to have a septic industry that has the oversight and capacity to adapt to our changing landscape. For these reasons, Clean Water Action supports the creation of a licensing board for the industry.

Many industries have similar commissions and boards to regulate the members of their industry, including:

- Appraisers, Appraisal Management Companies, and Home Inspectors
- Barbers
- Cemeteries
- Interior Designers
- Elevator Safety Review
- Foresters
- Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVACR) contractors
- Home Improvement Contractors
- Locksmiths
- Electricians
- Plumbers
- Pawnbrokers

Ultimately, a septic system has the sole responsibility for treating hazardous waste coming out of a home or place of business. It is essentially a decentralized wastewater treatment plant and **needs to be designed, installed, and serviced properly for its specific conditions and flows**. The patchwork, decentralized system Maryland currently employs is not sufficient to regulate this industry. Having a licensing and regulatory board enables a consistent floor of regulations for the industry and continuing education requirements. The legislation does not preempt local authorities from having localized requirements or licensing.

SB479 improves accountability to ensure proper design and workmanship in installation and maintenance and is a critical tool to safeguard against faulty designs and faulty installations that pollute our waterways and groundwater, and pose a public health risk.

We respectfully request a favorable report on SB479 to create a licensing board for the Onsite Wastewater Industry.

Thank you,

Emily Ranson  
Clean Water Action  
[eranson@cleanwater.org](mailto:eranson@cleanwater.org)

Elle Bassett  
Shoer Rivers  
[ebassett@shorerivers.org](mailto:ebassett@shorerivers.org)

Erik Fisher  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation  
[EFisher@cbf.org](mailto:EFisher@cbf.org)