



Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill 392 – Wastewater Facility Supplemental Operations and Maintenance Grant Program – Establishment

Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee
February 15, 2023

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in **SUPPORT of SB392** on behalf of Arundel Rivers Federation. Arundel Rivers is a non-profit organization dedicated to the protection, preservation, and restoration of the South, West and Rhode Rivers with over 3,500 supporters. Our mission is to work with local communities to achieve clean, fishable, and swimmable waterways for present and future generations.

Senate Bill 392 is critical to protecting and restoring our local water quality and will provide much needed support to struggling municipally owned wastewater infrastructure. Specifically, this grant opportunity will provide funding for public wastewater facilities facing staff shortages, maintenance backlogs, and other operations and maintenance challenges that threaten the proper function of a facility, which ultimately threatens the Chesapeake Bay and the state’s water quality goals. Additionally, the grant program will prioritize facilities that face these issues in underserved and overburdened communities, relieving fiscal burdens the facility may face and improving the health of the waterways and environment of that community.

Our state has recognized that upgrading wastewater treatment plants is an efficient and effective way to reduce pollution and make gains towards our water quality goals. This bill will directly support that initiative by providing support for Maryland’s overburdened and underserved communities that may need additional support in operating wastewater facilities.

Maryland is currently “off course” in meeting our 2025 Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) Outcome goals in nutrient, phosphorus, and sediment.¹ This indicates that pollution control measures are not strong enough and more resources need to be devoted to addressing point source pollution facilities. Senate Bill 392 will help our state in taking a step closer towards achieving our target goals.

For these reasons, Arundel Rivers respectfully requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 392.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elle Bassett".

Elle Bassett
South, West and Rhode Riverkeeper
Arundel Rivers Federation

¹ 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs). CAST19. <https://www.chesapeakeprogress.com/clean-water/watershed-implementation-plans>