



House Bill 302

Environment - On-Site Wastewater Services - Regulation

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**
WITH AMENDMENTS

To: Education, Health, and Environmental
Affairs Committee

Date: March 17, 2021

From: Alex Butler

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS HB 302 WITH AMENDMENTS**. MACo supports licensure for on-site wastewater property inspectors, but does not believe there is enough evidence to warrant the creation of a Board designed to license other on-site wastewater service providers. **MACo believes that licensing inspectors would achieve the intended purpose of the bill without the need for a Board, but welcomes additional research to further identify problem areas in the industry.**

MACo and the Maryland Conference of Local Environmental Health Directors have engaged with stakeholders to try and come to an agreement regarding regulations for the industry. MACo, after consultation with county environmental health directors, is aware of numerous instances where inspectors with insufficient training signed off on a septic system that was clearly failing or in need of major repairs. Due to this systemic problem, the Conference and MACo can agree that on-site wastewater inspectors should be licensed by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), which will occur upon the passage of HB 407. An agreement cannot be reached on the creation of a Board responsible for licensure of the many other on-site wastewater professionals included in HB 302.

Data presented showed issues with systems were not abundant within three years after installations, suggesting that installers are sufficiently regulated. The vast majority of counties already require licensure for installers, collecting fee revenue for Local Health Departments (LHDs). Haulers or “pumpers” are also licensed by counties based on regulations promulgated by MDE.

MACo recognizes the need to license transfer inspectors but believes there is a lack of data identifying systemic issues with other service providers. MACo is supporting HB 302 with amendments to require that MDE complete a study in consultation with the Conference and other stakeholders including industry representatives and advocates in an effort to identify problem areas among industry professionals.

For these reasons, MACo urges a report on HB 302 of **FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS**.