



House Bill 878

Bay Restoration Fund - County Authority to Incur Indebtedness

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

To: Appropriations Committee

Date: February 25, 2021

From: Michael Sanderson and Kevin Kinnally

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 878. This bill provides counties with an optional and flexible tool to make grants and loans to address septic system pollution.

HB 878 authorizes a county to borrow money and incur indebtedness through the issuance and sale of notes in anticipation of the receipt of the county's allocation of funds under the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF). Counties may use the proceeds to assist homeowners with costs related to upgrading septic and on-site disposal systems.

MACo supports this bill because it gives counties another "tool in the toolbox" to meet their nitrogen reduction goals under the Phase III Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan. As counties exhaust their options for connecting failing septic systems to public sewer or upgrading them to systems using best available technology for nitrogen removal, it is critical to encourage residents to replace conventional septic tanks with nitrogen-reducing units.

This bill provides a sensible and flexible approach for counties to provide needed funding for septic system upgrades that will reduce the amount of harmful nutrient discharge into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee issue a **FAVORABLE** report on HB 878.