



## House Bill 1765

### *On-Site Sewage Disposal Systems – Watershed Implementation Plan and Bay Restoration Fund Disbursements and Financial Assistance*

MACo Position: **SUPPORT**

Date: March 13, 2018

To: Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Leslie Knapp, Jr.

The Maryland Association of Counties (MACo) **SUPPORTS** HB 1765. The bill authorizes a local jurisdiction to create a “septic stewardship plan” with funding to assist homeowners in the maintenance and operation, including pump outs, of their septic systems.

HB 1765 provides that a county may use up to 10% of its Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) septic system allocation to assist homeowners for the reasonable cost of having an operation and maintenance contract on a septic system, including conducting pump outs.

The financial assistance is only available in a local jurisdiction that has created a septic stewardship plan. The bill specifies the contents of the plan and allows BRF monies to be used for the development of the plan during FY 2020 and 2021. The financial assistance may be provided through grants, rebates, or low- or no-interest loans, with priority given to low-income homeowners.

MACo is supportive of HB 1765 because it gives counties another “tool in the toolbox” to meet its nitrogen reduction goals under the Phase III Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP). As a county exhausts its options for connecting failing septic systems to public sewer or upgrading them to systems using best available technology for nitrogen removal, it may make sense for the county to encourage the proper operation and maintenance of septic systems.

HB 1765 provides an optional tool that counties could use to make further nitrogen reductions in the septic system sector to meet their Bay restoration and WIP goals. Accordingly, MACo requests the Committee give HB 1765 a **FAVORABLE** recommendation.