

STATE OF MARYLAND

MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Robert M. Summers, Ph. D., Secretary

BILL NO: SB 609

COMMITTEE: Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs

POSITION: Oppose

TITLE: Environment – Bay Restoration Fee – Mobile Home Park Users

BILL ANALYSIS: This legislation proposes to limit the Bay Restoration Fund (BRF) fee to \$2.50 per month for each equivalent dwelling unit for mobile home owners who live in a park of not more than 25 homes, are connected to an onsite sewage disposal system, and do not receive a water bill. Currently, this fee is \$5 per month. This will have an effect on the Department as there will be less revenue available to provide grants to local governments to upgrade onsite sewage disposal systems with best available technology (BAT). The Department does not know how many of the mobile homes in the state would be included in this legislation, but for illustrative purposes if all 38,000 were included, the reduction in BRF revenue would be greater than \$1 million. Operating expenses from the Bay Restoration Fund are a percentage of the revenue deposited with the Department, so funds available for operations would also be reduced by up to \$92,000.

The bill proposes to use equivalent dwelling unit as a basis for the fee calculation. The definition of equivalent dwelling unit, as defined in the law, means a measure of wastewater effluent where one unit is equivalent to 250 gallons of wastewater effluent discharged per day. Given the scenario presented in the bill, an onsite disposal system with no water bill, there is no means to calculate an equivalent dwelling unit, since there is no meter to measure the amount of water or wastewater a home uses.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: MDE opposes SB 609.

The BRF was created with the intent that all Marylanders should contribute equally to the cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay. The Maryland General Assembly amended the original BRF legislation to specifically apply the fee to septic system owners, in addition to those who are served by a waste water treatment plant. This bill would excuse a segment of Maryland citizens from paying the full fee, while the rest of the citizens continue to pay the full fee amount. This was never the intent of the Bay Restoration Fund.

Furthermore, the fee for the mobile home park users targeted in this bill could not be calculated, as there is no way to determine equivalent dwelling unit for these homes. The homes have no meter to measure the amount of water or wastewater a home uses, and thus no way to convert that use to an equivalent dwelling unit.

This legislation will have an effect on the Department as there will be less revenue available to provide grants to local governments to upgrade onsite sewage disposal systems with BAT. Also, operating expenses from the Bay Restoration Fund are a percentage of the revenue deposited with the Department, so funds available for operations would also be reduced.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
CONTACT JEFF FRETWELL
410-260-6301 ANNAPOLIS
410-537-3812 BALTIMORE