

MEETING SUMMARY
MEETING OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY TMDL STEERING COMMITTEE:
SEPTIC SYSTEM LEGISLATIVE SUBCOMMITTEE
SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

Brian Swets, CH
Clay Bernick, VB
Dave Tiller, VDH
Erin Sutton, VB Health
Fran Geissler, JCC
Joseph Reish, SM
June Whitehurst, NO
Kim Hummel, IOW

Marty Schlesinger, GL
Nancy Munnikhuysen, HRSD
Peter Pommerenk, VB DPU
Wayne Griffin, SM
Jenny Tribo, HRPDC
Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC
Lisa Hardy, HRPDC

1) Onsite Septic Systems in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL

Jennifer Tribo, HRPDC staff, reviewed the required nitrogen reductions in the septic system sector as required by Chesapeake Bay TMDL. The Proposed Final Alternative Onsite Sewage System (AOSS) Regulations will help localities reduce nitrogen loads, but will not achieve all the reductions needed. The subcommittee agreed that tools are needed to incentivize owners of septic systems that are non-failing, but are not operating efficiently either, to upgrade to denitrifying systems.

The Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase 1 Watershed Implementation Plan includes additional options for the onsite/septic sector that would include Code of Virginia changes and interagency cooperation. The group discussed the options listed in the WIP and selected one option and proposed two others that it would like to have pushed forward first. The three top tier options are listed below in no particular order.

- Seek legislative changes necessary to establish tax credits for upgrade/replacement of existing conventional systems with nitrogen reducing systems, *or connection to existing sewer (added during discussion)*.
- Look into steps for gaining General Assembly approval to grant all counties the authority to require hook-ups to existing sewer lines when appropriate.
- Work with state agencies to establish a cost share program, similar to what is done with the Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program, to assist with the cost of required upgrades or replacements and incentivize non-failing septic system owners to upgrade to a denitrifying system.

Follow-up

- Fran Geissler, JCC, will follow-up on how the Nutrient Credit Exchange Program will function.
- Whitney Katchmark, HRPDC staff, will look into assistance programs through the Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project.

Action

The subcommittee recommends the Chesapeake Bay TMDL Steering Committee support seeking legislative changes necessary to establish tax credits for upgrades/replacement of existing conventional systems with nitrogen reducing systems, or connecting to existing sewer; looking into steps necessary for General Assembly approval to grant all counties the authority to require hook-ups to existing sewer lines when appropriate; and work with state agencies to establish a cost share program as is done with the Agricultural BMP Cost Share Program.