



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
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November 24, 2014

RE: STAC Onsite Septic Systems Report

Nicholas DiPasquale, Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109  
Annapolis, MD 21403

Cc: Management Board; STAR; Water Quality GIT, Wastewater Treatment Workgroup, Land Use Workgroup, Watershed Technical Workgroup

Dear Mr. DiPasquale,

Please see the attached STAC workshop report entitled, "In My Backyard: An Innovative Look at the Advances of Onsite Decentralized Wastewater Treatment." This report provides a summary of STAC's December 2013 workshop. The report also includes specific recommendations identified by workshop attendees. Attendees recommended the following priority recommendations in addition to secondary recommendations, which can be viewed in the full report:

Priority Recommendations for the Partnership include:

1. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model (CBWM) should contain detailed information on the soils used in wastewater drainfields and how those soils interact with nitrogen. The report recommends that the CBWM be refined to reflect how soils interact with nitrogen loadings from onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS).
2. Education and investment are needed to further develop onsite technologies. Both consumer interest and public support will be key to this success. Even if all of the engineering goals for OWTS are attained, there can be no success if homeowner education concerning the OWTS and its proper maintenance is not improved. The report recommends that the EPA, the CBP, and the Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions work to educate the public in onsite wastewater treatment and seek public buy-in for demonstration projects like the Massachusetts eco-toilet project.

3. Both federal and local funding is necessary, as well as community education and outreach to ensure proper management of septic infrastructure and to reduce costs into the future. The report recommends that federal funding is needed to address the onsite wastewater treatment infrastructure needs.
4. Interaction and collaboration between states needs to occur regarding the use of septic onsite and decentralized technologies. Such interactions are often underrated and the buy-in is necessary for adoption to occur. The report recommends that the CBP should reach out to the Chesapeake Bay watershed jurisdictions to identify possible collaboration options and help provide future assistance to ensure continued progress.
5. Data sharing between states in a number of areas is critical. The report recommends that funding the initial development of those efforts, including the sharing of test data from treatment units, should be considered by EPA along with the possible management and funding of inter-state data sharing efforts.
6. The proper management of infrastructure, including OWTS, is critical and so is the balance of federal and local funding for such efforts. Viable onsite options will save communities money over time. The report recommends that education and outreach efforts about the options be initiated and focused on communities most in need of such support to address their wastewater issues.

STAC respectfully offers these recommendations for your information and deliberation. Please direct any questions you may have about this report and its recommendations to Matt Ellis, the Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee Staff.

On behalf of the entire STAC, thank you again for considering these recommended next steps, and we look forward to working with you closely on this in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kirk Havens', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Kirk Havens

Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee