

Oppose problematic onsite sewage bill, harmful to public health and the environment

Action

Please call members of the [Senate Committee on Education and Health](#) to oppose [SB 1277 \(Obenshain\)](#).

Key Information

[SB 1277 \(Obenshain\)](#) exempts all onsite sewage treatment systems designed by professional engineers, including alternative onsite sewage systems (AOSS), from the Virginia Health Department's performance and horizontal setback requirements.

Those requirements are vital to protect not only adjacent property owners, but also the Chesapeake Bay and groundwater recharge areas throughout the Commonwealth.

The only factors remaining in the law governing the design of these systems are "standard engineering practice" and that the onsite systems "meet or exceed the discharge, effluent, and surface and ground water quality standards otherwise permitted."

Talking points

- The General Assembly has concluded in prior legislation that performance and horizontal setback requirements for AOSS are "...necessary to protect public health and the environment."
- [SB 1277](#) circumvents the regulatory process that has been ongoing since 2009 and remains ongoing. Performance and horizontal setback standards should not be reduced for anyone before those regulations take effect.
- Professional engineers were involved fully in the development of the performance and horizontal setback standards in the AOSS regulations. There no evidence has been presented that professional engineers should be exempt from those requirements.
- The General Assembly preempted local AOSS regulations in 2009 with the promise that the statewide AOSS regulations would protect public health and the environment; [SB 1277](#) goes back on that promise.

Key contacts

Senate Education and Health Committee: [Houck \(Chairman\)](#), [Saslaw](#), [Lucas](#), [Howell](#), [Quayle](#), [Martin](#), [Newman](#), [Edwards](#), [Ruff](#), [Whipple](#), [Blevins](#), [Locke](#), [Barker](#), [Northam](#), [Miller, J.C.](#)

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