

Virginia Department of Health  
House Bill 558  
Repair Fund Element Development Team  
May 11, 2016 Meeting Summary

Attendees

Alan Brewer   Jon Richardson   Patrick Bolling   Lance Gregory   David Tiller

Summary

This meeting was scheduled to discuss a recommendation concerning the need to establish a fund to assist income-eligible citizens with repairing onsite sewage systems and private wells.

A discussion on eligibility included homeowners below the poverty line and a percentage of average mean income and what would be the fairest method. As of 2013, approximately 11.3 percent of Virginians live below the poverty line. According to the United States Census Bureau data, nearly 42 percent of Americans living below the poverty line own their own home which would equate to about 5 percent of Virginia's homeowners live below the poverty line. Using some percentage of the average mean income would be more inclusive.

A discussion of the need for funding progressed into different structured options. Tier groups were discussed that would allow for different levels of assistance.

Tier 1 would allow for funding site and soil evaluations and designs for conventional onsite sewage systems. Tier 1 would cover the basic need that a transition from the public sector to the private sector would leave unfunded.

Tier 2 would allow for funding of Tier 1 + installation cost (materials and labor).

Tier 3 would allow for funding of Tier 2 + operation and maintenance for 5+/- years including sampling.

The group discussed what agency would be best to oversee the repair funding element. Planning District Commissions and/or Social Services could be used to administer the funding portion of the program similar to a community block grant. A suggestion was made to research existing government grant programs that use a percentage of the average mean income and look at other states for additional options.

The group discussed potential code changes, regulation changes and policy changes that may be needed to implement one or more recommendations. Amending existing Codes were discussed. A more favorable approach was to create a new state code that would address water quality and public health for the greater good. A Chesapeake Bay restoration fee or something similar could be assessed to all Virginians for this purpose.

Total resources needed for a recommendation should include a breakdown between individual tier groups for both alternative and conventional onsite sewage systems, costs for private well repairs plus general administrative costs.