STATE OF MARYLAND
MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT
Shari T. Wilson, Secretary

BILL NO: House Bill 604

COMMITTEE: Environmental Matters

POSITION: Oppose

TITLE: Environment – Greywater – Residential Use

BILL ANALYSIS: HB 604 defines greywater as used untreated water generated by clothes washing machines, showers, bath tubs, and lavatory sinks and shall not include water from kitchen sinks, dishwashers or toilets. The Bill establishes requirements whereby a person may discharge up to 400 gallons of greywater per day for household gardening, lawn watering, and composting or landscape irrigation.

POSITION AND RATIONALE: MDE opposes this bill as unnecessary to protect the environment or pubic health and unnecessary to authorize the use of greywater for the stated purposes.

"Graywater" is already defined in the National Standard Plumbing Code, which has been incorporated by reference into the Code of Maryland Regulation (COMAR), albeit with a different spelling. The Bill proposes nearly identical language.

The definition of greywater, as proposed by this Bill, would be considered sewage as defined in both COMAR and the Annotated Code of Maryland. Regulations are already in place authorizing the discharge of sewage both subsurface and to the surface of the ground. The requirements proposed in the Bill are similar to those in place but more specific in some areas and less specific in others. The main difference is that the Bill authorizes a discharge if certain conditions are met, but does not specify a regulatory authority responsible for ensuring those conditions are actually met. Under existing Statute either Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) or a delegated approving authority would assure that discharge standards can be met and issue a permit for the discharge. If approved, the Bill would not change the requirement for a permit; however the Bill presents the possibility of conflicting standards.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION,
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