



Cecil County, Maryland

OFFICE OF FINANCE
200 CHESAPEAKE BLVD., SUITE 1100
ELKTON, MARYLAND 21921

TEL: (410) 996-5385 OR (410) 658-4041
FAX: (410) 996-5319

FLUSH TAX FACTS

Questions and Answers Regarding the Bay Restoration Fee

1. **What is the background of this program?** This is a **State mandated** program. The Bay Restoration Fee was originally proposed by Governor Ehrlich as a way to raise money to rehabilitate and upgrade aging sewage treatment plants throughout the State of Maryland. The original proposal was to charge a “fee” to property owners served by public water or sewer services. When the bill went to the state legislature in early 2004, it was amended by members of the House of Delegates to include an annual fee for property owners that were served by a private septic system. The bill passed both the Senate and House of Delegates in the amended form and was signed by the Governor.
2. **How does it work?** For property owners with public water or sewer, their billing authority (county, town or private company) is required to include a quarterly charge of \$15.00 on the water or sewer bill. Property owners with private septic systems are required to pay an annual fee of \$60 per year. **Local collectors throughout Maryland (the county finance directors, treasurers, town clerks or private utility companies) are required by state law to collect these fees and remit them to the state comptroller.** Monies received from people with public utilities are set aside to rehabilitate or upgrade several sewage plants throughout the state. Monies received from private septic owners are set aside to be used for private septic upgrade or cover crops for farmers.
3. **How much of this money stays in Cecil County?** The county is allowed to keep up to 5% of the amount it collects to cover expenses incurred in the billing and collection process. In order to collect this money, the county is required to submit a monthly bill to the state. If the state approves the expenditures, we receive a reimbursement from them. Additionally, the sewage treatment plants in Elkton, Perryville and North East are included on the list of the 67 plants eligible for funding. This money will be distributed by order of priority, according to state guidelines. Finally, money is supposed to be available to property owners for upgrading private septic systems.
4. **How can I apply for funding for my private system?** Call Maryland Department of the Environment at 410-537-4195 for more information regarding this program.
5. **If this is not a county tax, why does it appear on my property tax bill?** When the state passed the Bay Restoration Fee law, it required the local tax collectors to collect the fee on behalf of the state as is currently done with the state property tax. The County has always collected taxes on behalf of the state.
6. **As our elected representative, why didn't you stop this?** The County voiced opposition to the law, but has no power to make the laws. The County Collector has NO legislative authority. The law was written and passed by people in Annapolis for the benefit of the State.