

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
COMMISSION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

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March 10, 2008

St. Mary's County Plumbing & Gas Board  
C/o Mr. Adam Knight  
Department of Land Use & Growth Management  
P.O. Box 653  
Leonardtown, MD 20650

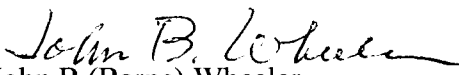
Members of the Plumbing & Gas Board:

We understand that discussion of "gray water plumbing systems" is on the agenda for your next meeting. We would like to ask that your board, at this session, favorably consider amending or revising the County's current Plumbing Code to both permit and encourage the use of these systems in both new and occupied commercial, residential and industrial applications within St. Mary's County. As you are aware, many jurisdictions around the nation currently permit and successfully use gray water systems in an effort to conserve scarce resources. Consequently, we believe that finding the appropriate Code rewording will not present problems. Additionally, we have been told that this change is entirely within the County's administrative and legislative authority.

The Commission on the Environment and its subordinate Water Policy Task Force does not make the above request lightly and would briefly like to outline our rationale. First, adoption will, over time, reduce water demands from aquifers that now supply all our potable and other water needs. In particular, aquifers in the Lexington Park, Leonardtown and Charlotte Hall areas are highly stressed, but they are also in the best location to take immediate advantage of this technology. Second, gray water systems reduce the load on our sewage treatment plants and thus save the County and its taxpayers money. Third, use of gray water will reduce the amount of sewage treatment plant effluent discharged into the Bay and its tributaries and, by doing so, reduce the amount of nitrogen released as a by-product. This will not only improve Bay pollution but also help our Metropolitan Commission meet the stringent nitrogen discharge "caps" which the State has imposed.

We hope the above information will be of help in your deliberations. If we can be of any further assistance in support of this worthy initiative, please do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,

  
John B.(Barne) Wheeler  
Chairman, Commission on the Environment  
Chairman, Water Policy Task Force