

Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association
PO Box 155
Star Tannery, VA 22654

June 17, 2008

The Honorable John Watkins
Senator
Virginia General Assembly
P. O. Box 159
Midlothian, VA 23113-0159

Re: HB 1408 – Vetting of Proposed ‘Betterment’ Loan Statute by the Virginia Housing Commission

Dear Senator Watkins:

The Virginia Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association represents over 350 practitioners involved with designing, installing, manufacturing, operating, maintaining, monitoring and regulating onsite wastewater treatment systems across the State of Virginia. VOWRA supports HB 1408 and believes it would be a huge benefit to public health and the environment and requests that the Committee endorse the bill and support its passage through the General Assembly.

Much is being accomplished in this industry to bring it into the 21st Century. In 2007 the General Assembly passed laws which mandated maintenance of alternative onsite wastewater systems as well as required licensing of the practitioners to design, install and operate these facilities. The Virginia Health Department was also given civil penalty authority to enforce the new requirements. VOWRA supported these codes and have been actively working with the state departments to help with their implementation.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency, in its response to Congress in 1997, identified financing as one of the barriers preventing the proper and adequate management of onsite wastewater systems as part of the permanent infrastructure to meet the wastewater needs of the Nation. The needs of the large communities to address existing problems of combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows and additional nutrient removal surpass the funding made available by federal and state loan programs, leaving nothing for the individual systems which serve over 25 percent of the population served in Virginia. In addition, the program to administer the revolving loan program is not constructed to serve individuals.

Lastly, at this time of economic hardship on this industry, this bill will allow many to move forward where they cannot proceed today, thus helping to stimulate our economy.

Very truly yours,



Robert E. Lee
President, VOWRA