



SECRETARY GRUMBLES STATEMENT ON MOUNTAIN CHRISTIAN CHURCH WASTEWATER TREATMENT PROPOSAL

BALTIMORE (Oct. 23, 2019) -- The Maryland Department of the Environment's mission is to protect and restore the environment for the health and well-being of all Marylanders. The department appreciates and values public participation, and it extended the comment period for the Mountain Christian Church surface water discharge permit application and scheduled an additional informational meeting to receive and consider comments. Many comments centered on the proposal to discharge wastewater treated by an advanced system into a tributary to the Little Gunpowder Falls and stated a preference for the church's wastewater to instead be discharged within the bounds of the church's property..

The church has withdrawn its surface water discharge permit application and has informed MDE of its intention to work to permanently resolve the onsite septic system failure, including the noncompliance of the current treatment system and the failing drainfields, under its current groundwater discharge permit. This work may include improvements to the current drainfields or the establishment of replacement drainfields or both. It is to include the use of an advanced treatment system similar to the treatment system that had been proposed for use under the surface water discharge permit application and no discharge to a tributary of the Little Gunpowder Falls. The church is no longer seeking additional discharge capacity and will continue to be subject to the groundwater discharge permit's current limits (2,400 gallons per day average flow, 4,800 gallons per day maximum flow). MDE has asked the church to provide a schedule for the remaining steps for a combination drainfield/new advanced treatment system for the department's consideration.

Maryland Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles issued the following statement:

"The Maryland Department of the Environment embraces innovative and collaborative solutions for environmental progress. Our Water and Science Administration has been in communication with the church to provide technical assistance on its revised proposal to solve its wastewater issues with the addition of an advanced treatment system for its groundwater discharge with no discharge to a tributary of the Little Gunpowder Falls. We will carefully review and oversee the church's remaining steps to put this promising system into place to ensure the protection of the environment and public health throughout the watershed."

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