

# Sewage Disposal Working Group

October 1, 2025

# Septic System Approvals: Complex Issue

The regulations are the foundation we rely on to approve projects and must be robust enough to provide legal backing. However, without adequate funding, we can't ensure consistent training for sanitarians, appropriate DPH staffing levels, or needed updates to technical codes.

# Septic System Approvals: Complex Issue

The process itself includes many obstacles that must be identified and addressed — especially if we want to enable the advancement of affordable housing. But this must also be balanced against the needs of shoreline communities already under DEEP orders, the challenges of climate change (such as sea level rise), and the broader impacts on environmental and public health — including shellfish areas, bathing waters, and nitrogen impacts on surface and groundwater.

# Subcommittee Structure

- ▶ Three subcommittees will be formed.
- ▶ Each subgroup will identify key issues that require further evaluation within their group.
- ▶ Co-chairs have been contacted and confirmed
- ▶ Co-chairs will coordinate to establish meeting dates and schedules.
- ▶ The full group will meet every other Wednesday **from 2 pm to 3 pm.**
- ▶ **Action Item:**  
Please rank your subcommittee preferences (1 to 3) and submit your choices to one of the co-chairs: [jperras@hbact.org](mailto:jperras@hbact.org), [jguszkowski@tycheplans.com](mailto:jguszkowski@tycheplans.com), [brincks@guilfordct.gov](mailto:brincks@guilfordct.gov)

# Subcommittees

1. Nitrogen and the Environment
2. Regulations and Legal
3. Process and Funding

# Nitrogen & Environment

*Co-chairs Jim Perras and David Potts*

- ▶ Set nitrogen limits — define thresholds and applicable areas.
- ▶ Standardize calculation methods — consider variation for new builds, B100a conversions, and repairs.
- ▶ Define ESAs — what qualifies, where they apply, and who designates them.
- ▶ Address DEEP-ordered towns & Waterfront Properties — should there be a unified, stricter statewide standard?
- ▶ Include climate change — account for impacts like sea level rise.
- ▶ Implement monitoring — track real-time performance of installed systems.

# Regulations & Legal

*Co-chairs Sonia Brinckwirth, Tom Stanfield, and Robert Smith*

- ▶ Evaluate initial and ongoing training requirements for sanitarians and staff.
- ▶ Review the regulatory framework for establishing an Alternative Treatment (AT) Program to ensure collaboration with stakeholders and state agencies.
- ▶ Clarify the process for Technical Standards.
- ▶ Review the regulatory framework of the building code that allows for updates.
- ▶ Address B100a conversions in relation to affordable housing goals.
- ▶ Clearly define regulators' roles and responsibilities for implementation and enforcement.
- ▶ Assess legal risks, especially those related to the impact of affordable housing.
- ▶ Define the role of the Universal Relocation Act (URA) concerning displacement due to system failure.

# Process & Funding

*Co-chairs John Guskowski and Matt Gilchrist*

- ▶ Clarify interactions with land use processes.
- ▶ Identify bottlenecks in septic approvals.
- ▶ Define agency roles in approvals (DEEP, DPH, WPCA, Inland Wetlands, P&Z, others).
- ▶ Establish sustainable funding (e.g., Clean Water Funds, permit fees).



# Work Process & Timeline

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# Phase 1 (Now – Nov. 2025):

- ▶ Research & data gathering
- ▶ Member presentations
- ▶ Stakeholder input

## Phase 2 (Dec. 2025):

- ▶ Develop an outline of recommendations
- ▶ Assign writing duties

# Phase 3 (Jan. 2026)

- ▶ Draft report
- ▶ Circulate for revisions
- ▶ Final vote/consensus

**By Feb. 1, 2026**

File final report with appropriate legislative committee(s).

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Questions?