

Phase 7 Sewer/Septic Summary of Feedback

Septic Counts and Population Feedback

Secondary Review Feedback (March 2026)

Comment/Issue	Reviewer(s)	Revisions and Details	Status
Some odd trends can be seen in certain counties' population values over time (e.g., Lynchburg, VA).	Ariana Johns (VA DEQ)	The original dataset relied on aggregated population estimates from SILVIS. These values produced inaccurate temporal trends when summarized at the county level. The updated dataset now uses Decennial Census values as county-level controls to ensure consistent and accurate population estimates across all years.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADDRESSED Updated values sent out April 21, 2026.
Minor inconsistencies in counts and population values due to an outdated summary unit file.	Internal	Several summary units incorrectly mapped to counties, resulting in slight overcounts in some counties and slight undercounts in others. The aggregation errors were corrected using an updated Phase 7 summary unit file.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ADDRESSED Updated values sent out April 21, 2026.
Discrepancies between local septic system counts and modeled septic system counts.	Norm Goulet (NVRC); KC Filippino (HRPDC); Rob Hirsch and Nathan Forand (Baltimore County, MD)	Additional comparisons were conducted using local datasets from Baltimore County, Fairfax County, and Loudoun County. Differences between the local and modeled data primarily reflect methodology decisions previously approved by the WWTWG, such as: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. excluding septic systems located within sewer service areas, and 2. not accounting for multiple septic systems within a single parcel. 	INVESTIGATED AND IDENTIFIED AS A DATA LIMITATION

		<p>These differences are considered a known limitation of the dataset and reflect the constraints of the approved Phase 7 methodology.</p> <p>A request was made to replace modeled values with local datasets for these counties. However, all Phase 7 methodology decisions and data inputs were finalized as of September 30, 2025. Therefore, new data inputs or major methodological changes cannot be incorporated at this stage.</p>	
Overcounting of septic population in blocks that have households on sewer and septic	Internal	<p>Population on sewer and septic is determined by the proportion of parcels on sewer vs septic within each census block. This method could slightly overcount population on septic in blocks that are not 100% on septic, as the number of people in households connected to sewer is likely higher than the number of people in households on septic.</p> <p>For blocks that include households with both sewer and septic, the septic population was estimated by multiplying the number of septic households by the statewide median household size, calculated specifically from blocks that are entirely on septic systems. The rest of the population in these mixed blocks was assigned to sewer service. This adjustment provides a more accurate reflection of household size differences between sewer and septic properties.</p>	<p>☑ ADDRESSED</p> <p>Updated values sent out April 21, 2026.</p>

Initial Review Feedback (August 2025)

For more information, please review the presentations given at the [September 2025](#) and [January 2026](#) WWTWG meetings, as well as the minutes, posted on the calendar pages.

Comment/Issue	Reviewer(s)	Revisions and Details	Status
Sewer backcast does not account for growth in sewer over time.	Dave Montali, Tetra Tech (West VA)	The Phase 6 and initial Phase 7 methods assumed a constant sewer service area from 1985 to 2020, which did not reflect sewer expansion over time. To address this, new sewer service areas were developed for 1990, 2000, and 2010 to better represent growth of sewer area over time due to new development. These “backcast” sewer service areas were developed using the CBP land use backcast developed footprint, as well as the 1990 Census, which provides block-group level estimates of population served by sewer.	☑ ADDRESSED Method change approved by WWTWG on Sep 25, 2025.
Sewer service area omitted some developments directly adjacent to the existing sewer service area.	Internal	Some developments/neighborhoods located near the boundary of the sewer service area were not included due to a misalignment between local datasets and parcel data. A cluster analysis was performed to identify and incorporate neighboring developments directly outside the sewer service area that are likely to be served by sewer.	☑ ADDRESSED Method change approved by WWTWG on Sep 25, 2025.
County sewer data omits some census places within the county that are on sewer.	Internal	Adjustments were made to correct overestimation of septic systems in certain census places. The 2022 Clean Water Needs Survey was used to identify wastewater treatment plant locations and tag overlapping 2020 Census Places that had been unintentionally excluded from the sewer service area.	☑ ADDRESSED Method change approved by WWTWG on Sep 25, 2025.
Updated sewer data from various jurisdictions.	Representatives from jurisdictions listed in “Details” box.	Incorporation of sewer data provided by some jurisdictions that missed the original submission deadline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hampton Roads, VA • Amelia County, VA • Culpeper County, VA 	☑ ADDRESSED Re-reviewed by WWTWG in February 2026.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Blair County, PA• Perry County, PA• Centre County, PA• Sussex County, DE	
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Sewer Service Area Feedback

Secondary Review Feedback (February 2026)

Some issues with the web viewer were identified and fixed on February 2, 2026. No other issues or comments were received.