



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
The Honorable Sarah K. Elfreth

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 21, 2021

RE: **OPPOSE** – Senate Bill 324 – *Environment and Natural Resources – Complaints, Inspections, and Enforcement – Information Maintenance and Reporting*

Synagro is the largest recycler of organic by-products in the United States. Providing essential environmental solutions to over 600 public and private water and wastewater treatment facilities in the municipal and industrial sectors, the Company operates in every part of the nation, including Maryland, and employs more than 800 people nationwide. Synagro's direct land application and reclamation program is a proven, time-tested management approach, ensuring the beneficial use of biosolids and other suitable residuals. Synagro wishes to register its strong **opposition** for Senate Bill 324.

Senate Bill 324 will require the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) to develop and maintain a website that contains a broad range of information on complaints, inspections, and enforcement actions. The bill also requires the Department of Natural Resources to collect and publish information online. While the information that the legislation requires MDE to publish online is currently available to the public through a FOIA request, Synagro is concerned that its publication, as required in the bill, will lead to inaccurate public conclusions about permit compliance, given that many complaints may not be determined to be invalid and inspection findings may reflect technical issues as opposed to issues that have an environmental impact.

In addition, the summary information that Senate Bill 324 requires to be published could be used by organizations looking to stop or discredit a project by misusing the information. Public access to this information should continue to be accessed through a FOIA request as opposed to publishing the information online as required by Senate Bill 324. FOIA requests retain public access to the information while protecting the reputation of permitted facilities. An unfavorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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