



Larry Hogan | Governor
Boyd Rutherford | Lt. Governor
Kelly M. Schulz | Secretary of Commerce

DATE: March 4, 2021
COMMITTEE: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs
BILL NO: Senate Bill 889
BILL TITLE: Controlled Hazardous Substance Facility Permit – Research Facilities – Chemical Warfare Material Requirements

Statement of Information

As enacted in 1993, Environment Article §7-239.1 through 7.239.4 established rigorous requirements for the permitting of thermal incineration technology to destroy the 1,818 ton bulk mustard agent stockpile stored at Aberdeen Proving Ground. The statute does not currently discriminate between bulk chemical stockpile incineration, and research to develop new incineration-related technologies. Although the mustard stockpile has long since been destroyed, the statute prevents research and demonstration activity on new incineration-based remediation and destruction technologies for treatment of chemical agents and legacy chemical weapons. Senate Bill 889 would exempt incineration done for research, development, or demonstration purposes from the existing statute.

The U.S. Army Chemical Biological Center (CBC) based at Aberdeen Proving Ground employs over 1,400 researchers, technicians and support staff. Within its broader mission, the CBC is the Department of Defense designated capability for research, development and demonstration of technologies to destroy chemical and biological warfare materiel, including new and novel incineration technologies.

Currently the CBC has at least four planned programs, with more to follow, dependent on a Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) permit to produce chemical agents to be destroyed through development and demonstration of these new incineration-based technologies. The Department of Defense could move these programs elsewhere, although with great expense and program delays.

For more than a century the Chemical Biological Center and its forerunner organizations at Aberdeen Proving Ground have demonstrated ability to perform chemical agent operations with robust environmental and safety programs to protect the workforce, the community and the environment. Research on new incineration-based technologies will produce systems and procedures to destroy or remediate chemical agent and weapons in a safer, more expedient, and less costly manner. Development of new incineration technologies employs a highly technical workforce, and these new incineration-based systems will be produced by industry supporting the CBC. Senate Bill 889 will enable the retention and expansion of the aforementioned programs, leading to potential job growth and economic impact for Marylanders.