



Testimony in Support of HB473

FAVORABLE WITH AMENDMENTS:

- to change the recommended last possible start date before 1/1/2026.

Environment – Ambient Air Monitoring – Particulate and Fine Particulate Matter

February 13th, 2023

Dear Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in favor of HB473, on behalf of Assateague Coastal Trust (ACT), the Waterkeeper program for the lower Eastern Shore of Maryland and our partners. ACT protects and defends the health of Delmarva’s coastal waters through advocacy, education, science, and the enforcement of just and equitable clean water laws. If enacted, HB473 will be vital for all citizens of Maryland.

Establishing statewide ambient air monitors is crucial for us to study the current health impacts that are plaguing our citizens. From the populations in industrial areas of Baltimore, to the CAFO-impacted communities of the Eastern Shore, identifying known sources of pollution, and using that data to better regulate permits within the state should be of utmost priority this legislative session. **We are urging a favorable report with only one amendment: to change the recommended last possible start date before 1/1/2026.** Maryland is facing a crucial time where we are under threat from fake green energy schemes that are going to be placed in our most vulnerable communities. Collecting this data will be crucial before any new major businesses can be permitted throughout the state.

Currently, MDE does not require CAFOs to obtain permits to emit ammonia, in any amount. Under the Emergency Planning and Right-to-Know Act (“EPCRA”), ammonia has been listed as an extremely hazardous substance (EHS) due to its toxicity and flammability:

- It can cause adverse human health effects including “irritation of the eyes, the skin, the mucous membranes, headaches, nausea, also possible eye damage.”
- It poses a risk to worker safety and general human health.
- Ammonium particulates contribute to fine particulate matter (PM2.5).
- PM2.5 is a criteria pollutant under the federal Clean Air Act and contributes to an array of health issues.

Ammonia is a major source of harmful nitrogen to the already nitrogen- saturated Chesapeake Bay and Coastal Bays Watersheds. **Nitrogen is contributed to the Bay via wet deposition of converted ammonia into ammonium.**

The large and multiple exhaust fans on poultry CAFO buildings exhaust ammonia and other substances to prevent the chickens inside the houses from dying, exhausting the unfiltered emissions out into the environment. **The Ammonia deposits into local waters and is not controlled by stormwater management systems installed on the CAFO production area.**

Our cries of better air regulations and monitoring have fallen on deaf ears for years in the legislature. We are thankful that Delegates Fraser-Hidalgo, Charkoudian and Love are championing this bill this year. By requiring the state to reestablish and strengthen its ambient air monitoring, communities can begin to breathe a sigh of relief, knowing that their health and well-being is of the utmost priority and the data collected will be publicly available.

Thank you for this opportunity to submit public testimony in SUPPORT of HB473, and we respectfully request this Committee give a **FAVORABLE** report on Environment – Ambient Air Monitoring – Particulate and Fine Particulate Matter.

Sincerely,



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Co-signatures:

Chesapeake Legal Alliance
Community Development Network of Maryland
Concerned Citizens Against Industrial CAFOS (CCAIC)
Langley Park Civic Association, Inc.
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Maryland Campaign for Environmental Human Rights
Maryland Latinos Unidos
Patuxent Riverkeeper
Sentinels for Eastern Shore Health
ShoreRivers
Waterkeepers Chesapeake