

RE: HB 924

Written Testimony for March 1, 2023

**Dr. Frank M. Neighoff, Jr.
8903 Cuckold Point Road
Sparrows Point, MD 21219
410-336-1974
Dr.Frank.Neighoff@gmail.com**

I am testifying as President of the following organizations:

**Chesapeake Bay Association, Inc.
Chesapeake Bay Community Association, Inc.
Chesapeake Bay Environmental Alliance, Inc.
Back River Conservation Association, Inc.
Millers Island Residents Association, Inc.
Southeast Baltimore County Council, Inc.
Greater Baltimore County Association, Inc.**

I am testifying primarily related to the Back Water Treatment Plant. It is quite obvious Baltimore City is incapable of managing and overseeing the quality of service. Their past performance, or lack thereof, demonstrates they are incapable of monitoring their own management of the plant. This past year's failures, the City's initial refusal to accept MDE assistance, and the long duration required for the City to negotiate a deal for MDE to manage the plant, train employees, and restore it to acceptable levels is totally unacceptable. Along Back River, families were reluctant to sail, boat, canoe, kayak, water ski, or swim and were especially concerned for their children and grandchildren coming into contact with water from Back River. Most along Back River would not allow children or grandchildren to get in the water. Many of our communities, including my own Millers Island community, paid to test the water weekly and monthly to provide at least some semblance of information and security to residents. Communities were constantly inundated with midges who feed on the waste in the water and multiply more rapidly.

We fully support HB 924, submitted by Delegate Grammer. We need constant monitoring of the Back River facility as the City has proven unable to complete monitoring, report results, and take immediate corrective action to resolve

issues. They are also fully unprepared to train employees. When MDE is needed, we can't afford to wait months for the City to agree to allow their involvement nor negotiate contracts. We need MDE to step in immediately to manage the facility, provide monitoring, provide training, and rectify issues quickly. As residents and taxpayers, we have a right to be protected and to have the full usage of our property and live safely in and near our homes. We need constant spraying for midges as no community should have them in their homes, around outside picnics and sports events constantly. Considering the many communities that have been impacted and have the potential for continued impact, we should be provided a property tax credit to compensate for the loss of value of our homes due to this ongoing risk and nuisance. For my community, Millers Island, the ends of the numbered streets along Hinton Avenue, on Back River, are County owned as parks to allow all residents access to the water along with those who live on Hinton Avenue. Thus, all residents are impacted. Likewise, all of our homes are impacted by the infestations of midges. Thus, a property tax credit would provide some level of compensation to current taxpayers and offset the decrease in property value experienced by having to live with this ongoing impact and infestation as well as the impact to future sale value.

On behalf of all of my above-mentioned organizations and the residents and taxpayers who live in the communities along Back River who are represented by these organizations, we strongly urge you to vote "FOR" HB 924. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Frank Neighoff".

Dr. Frank M. Neighoff, Jr.
President