

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Matthew Baumgartner. I am writing support of Bill HB0924, and any other measures possible to ensure the health of Back River. I am 37 years old and a lifelong resident of Essex, most of those years I resided on the waterfront of Back River:

- I lived at 114 Villa Capri Circle in Essex from 1985 – 2003, a waterfront community

- I lived at 600A Riverside Drive in Essex from 2011 – 2014, an apartment on the water, attached to the business Riverside Marine

- My first home purchase was at 417 Walnut Grove Road in Essex, a water front single story home in need of much TLC, which I gutted and completely re-did. I lived there from 2014 – 2020. In that time I got married to my wife Shannon Kief, she moved in, we adopted a foster dog, and had our first child Evelyn in 2018.

- My wife and I purchased 2 adjacent un-improved waterfront lots on Beechwood Avenue in Essex in late 2018, with the plans to build our custom “forever home” within 5 years, once we were financially able.

- In August of 2020 we sold the Walnut Grove home, and moved to our current house, 2036 Riverview Road in Essex, a waterfront home next to Rocky Point Park. This is/was a temporary rental allowing us to work through the process of building our new home on our Beechwood properties. Shannon and I had our second child, Theodore, on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

- With our new house completing, we will be moving on March 24<sup>th</sup> into our “forever” waterfront home, at 1722 Beechwood Avenue.

Of my 37 years, I have lived on the shore of Back River for almost 30 of them. I cherish living on this river and wouldn't consider anywhere else home. I cannot stress how **saddened** Shannon and I are that we are moving into our new house that we've dreamed of over the past 5 years, with our 4 year old Evelyn and 2 month old Theodore, with the knowledge that we won't truly be able to enjoy everything that comes with living on the water. We have worked extremely hard our entire life and put everything, emotionally and financially, into this house, including having a new stone revetment put in, a new pier, a boat lift. We've done everything completely “by the book”, following every code and ordinance. Sat in on the variance hearings. Spent countless thousands of dollars on lawyer fees, site planning fees, and environmental impact fees. If the law requires it, we want it to be done, and done right. We are firm believers these policies are in place for a reason, and we want our growing family to be as safe as possible. With all the hoops and red tape we've been through, it should be pretty understandable we feel varying degrees of negative emotion to learn that the same level of laws and oversight aren't in place for a Waste Water Treatment plant that can literally pollute our environment and send people to the hospital. Over the past 4+ years of developing our property, there's been no short of 20 different visits from a government official to verify we are doing everything properly. Twice the county was called by neighbors to register noise and dust complaints due to my builders, and a government official was there within a couple of hours to shut down progress, and verify every permit was in order. All of this for a young family wanting to get a house built! I bring all of this up not to complain about the process, as said above Shannon and I are firm believers of the laws being in place and abiding by them; rather the

complaint is that this same level of scrutiny and laws can't be applied to a multi-billion dollar facility that's responsible for TREATING OUR WASTE WATER!!! It's completely and utterly unacceptable.

Yes, we are **saddened**. Our forever waterfront home is sitting on a river that's being polluted. Our dreams of being able to raise our kids on the water, with the joy of sprinting down the pier and jumping in the river; hopping in kayaks or paddle boards; tubing and skiing; catching fish and crabs off the pier, and cooking them for dinner; these dreams will have to be put on hold. I don't even feel safe having my family walking on the stone revetment, enjoying the environment as I did as a kid, searching for frogs, bugs, and snakes, turning over rocks and skipping stones, picking up sticks and making a pile for a bonfire, drying out a piece of driftwood that can eventually be whittled as a fun rainy day activity. If they slip and fall and touch the water, or have a cut on their hand and touch the rock, stick, etc; will they get sick? Will they be hospitalized with sepsis?

We are beyond sad. We are **mad**. We are mad that we have to teach our kids from a very young age that the environment isn't safe, and they can't go out front unsupervised to play. Mad that we're about to start paying north of \$10,000 per year in property taxes, for the "privilege" of living on a polluted river. Mad that nothing seems to be getting done about it.

Please, we beg of you. Fix the problem. Pass this bill.

 2/27/23

410-458-5141