



**SB1074 - Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit – Establishment**  
**Hearing Date: March 5, 2024**

**Position: FAVORABLE**

Dear Chair Feldman and Members of the Education, Energy and the Environment Committee:

Waterkeepers Chesapeake respectfully requests a FAVORABLE report on SB1074, which prohibits a person from utilizing industrial sludge in the State without a permit. Waterkeepers Chesapeake is a coalition of Waterkeeper programs across the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays region that work with their communities to protect local waterways. This bill will establish a permit program proposed to be administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment. This program will address deficiencies in the State's current approach to industrial sludge management that prevents the content of sludge from being well understood, encourages overapplication of sludge to land, and violates federal and State law.

Maryland has become a dumping ground for Dissolved Air Flotation (DAF) material, the sludge that's left over from industrial protein rendering. While often used as an agricultural soil amendment, overapplication to land and poorly controlled storage and handling of DAF subjects nearby farmers and residents to unbearable odors, insects, human health impacts, and the threat of polluted runoff reaching our waterways.

While Delaware and Virginia require a permit to utilize industrial sludge, Maryland does not. As a result, Maryland has become a profitable place for the material to go—and it's more than we can handle. The sludge is either land applied or held in expansive storage tanks, often without clear knowledge of what's in it. As much as half of the region's industrial sludge has been spread on Maryland land in recent years, according to a University of Maryland study.

The permitting program established by SB1074 puts Maryland on par with neighboring states that administer similar programs and closes a significant loophole that allows Maryland waters and communities to be harmed. For these reasons, we urge a favorable report on SB1074.

Contact:

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