

March 4, 2024

Re: Testimony in support of SB1074

Dear Chairman Feldman and Members the Energy, Environment and Education Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of SB1074. My name is Ben Pittsley and I am a resident of Cambridge, MD. More specifically I live at 3461 Beaver Neck Village Road which is 1.5 miles (shorter as the crow flies) from a site which has been dumping DAF onto their farm fields.

I was first made aware of DAF due to the major issues encountered in Wicomico County. Subsequently, myself, neighbors, and nearby residents noticed increased activity at a property on Aireys Road, Cambridge, MD including constant tanker trucks and 18 wheel trucks coming in and out of the property. More recently, I was personally travelling down Aireys Road between 3-4am and noted activity in the fields, which to my knowledge is an unusual practice for the local farmers in the area. I subsequently reported the activity to state contacts as suspicious. The concerns of myself and those in our community is not only due to the personal affects, but also the environmental effects. For example, the spreading of DAF causes unbearable smells, unnatural increases in nuisance bugs/insects, and a general concern for the wellbeing of neighboring properties and our water ways. Environmentally, we do not want to see farmland that has been farmed for decades or, in some cases, over 100 years negatively impacted or destroyed because of the mistreatment of this environmental sludge

I support this legislation because the proposed changes show responsible stewardship of our land. Our neighboring states of Delaware and Virginia require permitting for similar dumping showing there is a precedent for the request. If left unchecked, the State of Maryland will surely see negative impacts. My community specifically will also see negative impacts in areas such as Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, Transquaking River, and surrounding waterways. There have already been severe impacts to the waterways due to improper dumping by the Valley Proteins Inc. in 2022 and beyond. On a summer day, dozens if not hundreds of people use the waterways for recreation as well as fishing for food sources and if these waterways are contaminated then the effects on human health will be even more significant. My personal concerns have led my family and I to travel miles away to fish as opposed to walking a few hundred feet to fish from the Transquaking.

In closing I ask that the committee vote favorably for SB1074 and any amendments brought forward by the sponsors.

Sincerely,

Ben Pittsley
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