

SB1074 Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit

I am writing in favor of this bill because the application of this type of fertilizer in our rural residential community has created a situation where we cannot go out in the summer and enjoy our farm. The smell is unbearable. It reminds me of the combination of a sewage treatment plant and a rendering facility. The smell is long lasting. It does not go away in days; it takes weeks and redevelops after a rain. I raise beef cattle and my family is used to the normal country farm smells. This is not a usual organic fertilizer smell. It is much harsher and long lasting. Last year the farm across the street applied 100's of thousands of gallons to the fields. This is no exaggeration. There were multiple tractor-trailer tankers going into the fields every day, usually at least four per hour all day long and well into the night. The applications were done from April until 1 December. I contacted the Department Of Agriculture about this issue and I was told the farmer was doing all the paperwork he needed to do in order to make these applications. One of my issues with this is that currently it is a self reporting requirement he is following. There is no official verification that the amount applied is actually recorded correctly. I believe it is very possible from the number of trailer loads going into the field that the application rate was much higher than recorded, but there is no way to tell currently as far as I understand. These food processors need to get rid of their by product and the farmer is willing to take as much as he can haul. He pays nothing for it and I wonder if he is getting compensated for disposing of this material. We are very worried with the volume of material going in the ground that it is affecting the quality of the ground water. Our wells recently had increases in E.coli counts and I believe it is directly related. The runoff is an issue also. My neighbor has a pond that used to have turtles and fish in it, but last year all of them died. Once again I relate this to the applications. During the drier summer months as the applications were being done, clouds of dust moves over our farm and house carrying the smell and I assume some of the material onto our property and into our bodies through inhalation. This is both a quality of life issue and a health issue. I do not believe this type of industrial material should be allowed in such close proximity to homes and residential wells. I do not believe there has been enough study into the environmental affects or the health impact to the community. I understand as a farmer it is hard to make ends meet, but just because this is a cheap source of fertilizer that will help dispose of an unwanted industrial byproduct, doesn't mean it should be used. Especially under these circumstances in this community. I appreciate our local representatives taking up this important issue. We live in this community because it has always been a quiet farm community with fresh air and little worry of industrial waste being an issue with smell and ground water pollution. I hope you consider these regulations for applications. Strict oversight is needed because of the volume applied and the impact it has on local residents.

Thank you

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