

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. I am Margaret Smentkowski, a lifelong resident of the state of Maryland, and currently a resident in Ridgely. I live approximately a mile from the Tuckahoe State Park and am only a couple approximately a mile away from a DAF site that has a moratorium on it. My husband and I moved here 9 years ago to enjoy the nature and agriculture and be near our daughter, her husband and grandchildren.

We've had a bad experience with DAF storage in our area. A moratorium was put into effect by the County. Hartland Holdings LLC, the site operator, did not abide by the moratorium. Dumping at the site was seen by myself and other residents in the area. The smell and any possible leakage affect residents, business owners and any town activities or festivals. The elementary school is less than a mile from the DAF site. Residential homes are less than 1,000 feet. The trucks heading up and down the road are causing damage and don't seem to be concerned about the speed limit. Most homes in the area of the DAF site have well water. No one can seem to get an answer if the pit being used is safe for DAF storage. This would cause concern for the contamination of nearby streams and wells. The site operator's lack of respect for the moratorium and others is concerning. I'm concerned about smell coming from the DAF storage pit, flies and other insects attracted to and know it would reduce property values and affect the whole town of Ridgely. It seems there is big money to be made on this operation without any regulations in place.

I support this legislation because it will hold the land owners, site operators and truck drivers accountable through regulations and permitting. I'd prefer not to have DAF sites at all in the state of Maryland, but am not sure it will be stopped. I would hope the property taxes could be set higher for DAF storage area to help the cost of additional staffing needed to process the permits and their renewals, and provide a way to monitor and enforce the regulations. I would expect high fines or shut downs for those that violate the permit regulations or choose to ignore the process altogether. Maryland has become a dumping ground for DAF because of the lack of regulation. This is a beautiful state and we want to keep it this way.

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

Sincerely,

Margaret Smentkowski
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