

## **Testimony Supporting Environment: Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit - Establishment SB 1074**

### **Committee: Education, Energy, and the Environment**

March 5, 2024

Dear Senators Ready, Elfreth, West, and Lewis Young

I am a resident of District 41, support this bill and encourage all the State Senators to approve this bill which prohibits a person from utilizing industrial sludge in the State without a permit. The permit program proposed to be administered by the Maryland Department of the Environment addresses deficiencies in the State's approach to industrial sludge management that prevents the content of sludge from being well understood and encourages overapplication of sludge to land.

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. 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 SB 1074 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.

I find it hard to fathom that Maryland regulatory agencies allow this waste product to be dumped on farmers' fields without additional treatment. Other states require permits for sludge handling. Why don't we? The untreated sludge emits unbearable smells and threats to water quality. Land application of untreated dissolved air flotation industrial sludge is contaminating land, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay.

It is for these reasons that I am encouraging you to vote **in support of passing SB1074 Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit - Establishment**. Thank you for your time, service and consideration.

Sincerely,

**Bonnie Weissberg, 1704 Mt. Washington Ct., Apt. H, Baltimore, MD 21209**