

Testimony in Support of SB0732/HB0909
Sewage Sludge Utilization Permits -
Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances - Concentration Limits
Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee 18 February 2025
Submitted on 14 February 2025 by 8:10 am

To the Chair and Committee Members,

My name is Janet Ruhl. I live in Galena, MD, on the Sassafras River, and I urge a **favorable** report on SB0732/HB0909. Thank you in advance for your consideration of support.

Biosolids are a valuable agricultural resource for soil conditioning and nutrient content. However, the sewage sludge from which biosolids are derived, may contain pollutants and disease-causing organisms (pathogens). Sewage sludge must be treated to meet state and federal regulations to protect human and environmental health. Limits are in place for several heavy metals, PCB, and pathogens.

With the growing knowledge regarding long-term toxicity of Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), in particular perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) and perfluorooctanoic acid (PFOA), Maryland must implement limits for individual PFAS in biosolids in line with the limits established by the EPA, mandate testing for individual PFAS before land application, and restrict application of biosolids depending upon the concentrations of the individual PFAS found. These actions are needed to better manage applications of biosolids to protect drinking water, food supplies, and ecosystems from further contamination by harmful PFAS.

This Bill will:

- Require the Maryland Department of the Environment to set health-based concentration limits for PFOS and PFOA in biosolids applied to agricultural land
- Require testing of biosolids for PFAS contamination at least 14 days before land application.
- Restrict the application of biosolids with PFOS and PFOA concentrations higher than the limits.

By testing biosolids for PFAS and restricting application based on human and environmental health-based limits, Maryland will target biosolids disposal while protecting public health and the environment.

I **support** Bill SB0732/HB0909 which focuses on testing biosolids and restricting application based on the concentrations of individual PFAS. This bill is a logical extension to protecting agricultural lands from contamination with toxic heavy metals and disease-causing organisms (pathogens). With each new scientific discovery, we need to review and, potentially, adjust our practices.

Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give SB0732/HB0909 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,
Janet C. Ruhl