

Testimony in Support of SB0732

Education, Energy, and the environment Committee, Hearing 2/18/25

Submitted on 2/14/25

To All Committee Members,

My name is Ray Earnest; I live in Caroline County on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and I urge a favorable report on SB0732.

This bill will protect Marylanders from PFAS —persistent and harmful “forever chemicals.” Currently, Maryland applies nearly 90% of the biosolids from wastewater treatment plants to agricultural land, but biosolids containing PFAS pose a serious risk to public health and the environment. The known health risks, according to the federal EPA, include:

- Reproductive effects such as decreased fertility or increased high blood pressure in pregnant women.
- Developmental effects or delays in children, including low birth weight, accelerated puberty, bone variations, or behavioral changes.
- Increased risk of some cancers, including prostate, kidney, and testicular cancers.
- Reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections, including reduced vaccine response.
- Interference with the body's natural hormones.
- Increased cholesterol levels and/or risk of obesity.

When spread on farmland, these chemicals pollute soil, groundwater, crops, and wildlife, endangering communities, especially in rural areas like the Eastern Shore. This legislation will:

1. Help prevent the spread of harmful PFAS chemicals into Maryland's soil, water, and food supply by requiring testing of biosolids for PFAS contamination at least 14 days before land application; and

2. Protect public health and the environment by requiring the Maryland Department of the Environment to set health-based concentration limits for PFOS and PFOA in biosolids applied to agricultural land.

I support this bill because I care about the health of my family, my neighbors and all Marylanders. Thank you for your consideration, and I look to this committee to give SB0732 a favorable report.

Sincerely,
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