



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

*Environmental Protection and Restoration
Environmental Education*

Senate Bill 585

Agriculture - Processing of Poultry Litter for Alternative Use

Date: February 24, 2021

To: House Education, Health
and Environmental Affairs

Position: Support

From: Robin Jessica Clark
Maryland Staff Attorney

Chesapeake Bay Foundation **SUPPORTS** SB 585. This legislation may help reduce phosphorus pollution into the Bay through defining alternative uses of poultry litter and allowing its procurement, handling, and application.

Poultry litter is a good fertilizer for nutrient poor soils, but its nutrient rich content can seep polluting runoff into local waterways and the Bay. Even when nitrogen values are balanced with crop needs, fertilizer may leach excess phosphorus.

Phosphorus is one of the three major pollutants affecting the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Excess phosphorus contributes to dead zones—areas with low levels of oxygen where marine life cannot live—in creeks, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay.

Soil amendments produced through alternative use may help protect the bay from excess phosphorus pollution

Alternative use such as manure-to-energy produce nutrient-rich byproducts that can be used as soil amendments. As described in the legislation, the process separates phosphorus from the poultry litter such that the resulting soil amendments will not create the same runoff issues as untreated poultry litter.

In addition, as envisioned by the legislation, the alternative use market for soil amendments will be self-supporting, and function independent of the state cost-share program. Alternative use products may provide options to farmers as the state transitions into the next phase of the Phosphorus Management Tool.

CBF supported the implementation of the Phosphorus Management Tool in 2015, which was designed to identify the fields that contained the most phosphorus and the highest risk of potential runoff.

CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 585.

Maryland Office | Philip Merrill Environmental Center | 6 Herndon Avenue | Annapolis Maryland 21403 | 410 268-8816 | CBF.ORG

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) is a non-profit environmental education and advocacy organization dedicated to the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. With 300,000 members and e-subscribers, including over 109,000 in Maryland alone, CBF works to educate the public and to protect the interest of the Bay and its resources.