

**MBIA Letter of Support SB 171.pdf**

Uploaded by: Lori Graf

Position: FAV

January 18, 2022

The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky  
Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee  
Miller Senate Office Building,  
2 West Wing 11 Bladen St.,  
Annapolis, MD, 21401

**RE: Support SB 171 Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act**

Dear Chairman Pinsky:

The Maryland Building Industry Association, representing 100,000 employees statewide, appreciates the opportunity to participate in the discussion surrounding **SB 171 Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act**. MBIA **Supports** the Act in its current version.

This bill would allow for the use of virtual meetings by the Department of the Environment to meet requirements for licensing or permitting applications. MBIA respectfully supports this measure. The use of virtual meetings is significantly more efficient than in-person meetings allowing for cost and time savings on behalf of both the Maryland Department of Energy and the applicant. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when we are experiencing new variant spikes such as the Omicron variant, it is important to provide people with tools to comply with the recommended social distancing and public health and safety guidelines.

For these reasons, MBIA respectfully requests the Committee give this measure a favorable report. Thank you for your consideration.

For more information about this position, please contact Lori Graf at 410-800-7327 or [lgraf@marylandbuilders.org](mailto:lgraf@marylandbuilders.org).

cc: Members of the Senate Education, Health & Environmental Affairs Committee

# **SB0171\_FAV\_NWRA\_Env. - Pub. Participation Moderniz**

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: FAV

**Maryland-Delaware Solid Waste Association**  
a chapter of the



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
The Maryland Department of the Environment

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 18, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 171 – *Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act*

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The Maryland Delaware Solid Waste Association (MDSWA), a chapter of the National Waste and Recycling Association, is a trade association representing the private solid waste industry in the State of Maryland. Its membership includes hauling and collection companies, processing and recycling facilities, transfer stations, and disposal facilities. MDSWA and its members **support** Senate Bill 171.

Senate Bill 171 proposes to amend general public participation and notice requirements for a number of permits that are issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) including permits to install, materially alter, or materially extend landfill systems, incinerators for public use, or rubble landfills. Under current law, MDE must hold any required public informational meetings and hearings at a location near where the permit or license applies. Senate Bill 171 would authorize these public informational meetings and hearings to be held using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology unless federal law requires the meeting or hearing to be held in person or any person requests that the meeting or hearing be held in person.

MDSWA strongly supports the proposed changes to the public notice, public hearings, and informational meetings requirements. The changes are necessary given the changes in federal public notice rules and public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. MDSWA not only believes that these changes will facilitate the ability for MDE to timely process permit applications even under the limitations of a pandemic, but that conducting hearings and meetings using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology will provide increased opportunities for the public to engage in the licensing and permitting process and will likely save time and money for both MDE and applicants. MDSWA urges a favorable report.

**For more information call:**

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
410-244-7000

# **SB0171\_FAV\_Synagro\_Env. - Pub. Participation Moder**

Uploaded by: Pam Kasemeyer

Position: FAV



TO: The Honorable Paul G. Pinsky, Chair  
Members, Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee  
The Maryland Department of the Environment

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman

DATE: January 18, 2022

RE: **SUPPORT** – Senate Bill 171 – *Environment – Public Participation Modernization Act*

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Synagro is the largest recycler of organic by-products in the United States. Providing essential environmental solutions to over 600 public and private water and wastewater treatment facilities in the municipal and industrial sectors, the Company operates in every part of the nation, including Maryland, and employs more than 800 people nationwide. Synagro's direct land application and reclamation program is a proven, time-tested management approach, ensuring the beneficial use of biosolids and other suitable residuals. Synagro wishes to register its strong **support** for Senate Bill 171.

Senate Bill 171 proposes to amend general public participation and notice requirements for a number of permits that are issued by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) including permits to install, materially alter, or materially extend a structure used for storage or distribution of sewage sludge. The bill authorizes public informational meetings and hearings to be held using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology unless federal law requires the meeting or hearing to be held in person or any person requests that the meeting or hearing be held in person and public notices to be posted on the MDE website and other means of electronic communication in addition to in print.

Given the changes in federal public notice rules and public health and safety concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic, the proposed changes are essential for MDE to enable them to continue to timely process permits while ensuring public notice and participation. In fact, what has been learned during the pandemic is that conducting hearings and meetings using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology often provides increased opportunities for the public to engage in the licensing and permitting process and will likely save time and money for both MDE and applicants. A favorable report is requested.

**For more information call:**

Pamela Metz Kasemeyer  
J. Steven Wise  
Danna L. Kauffman  
(410) 244-7000

# **SB 171 Environment - Public Participation Moderniz**

Uploaded by: Robin Jessica Clark

Position: FAV



# CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

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Environmental Protection and Restoration  
Environmental Education

## Senate Bill 171

Environment - Public Participation Modernization Act

Date: January 18, 2022

To: Senate Education, Health and Environmental Affairs  
Committee

Position: Support

Contact: Robin Clark, [rclark@cbf.org](mailto:rclark@cbf.org)

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The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) **SUPPORTS SB 171**. This bill seeks to modernize public participation in the Department of Environment's decision making by authorizing the Department to hold certain public meetings and hearings regarding licensing, permitting, and regulatory responsibilities using teleconference or Internet-based conferencing technology.

During Maryland's COVID-19 State of Emergency, the opportunity to participate in public hearings virtually has been a convenience for many, and in some cases, CBF has observed an increase in public participation likely because of the possibility to join meetings remotely. Virtual hearings also carry the additional benefit of decreasing greenhouse gas emissions that may have been associated with travel to a meeting location. CBF supports this legislative effort to continue the positive practice uncovered in response to the global pandemic.

This legislation also accommodates the possibility to continue to hold meetings in person. The Department only has the option to hold a meeting via teleconference or internet-based conferencing when federal law or regulation allows, and when a member of the public has not requested that the meeting be held in person. This safeguard will help protect the interests of concerned citizens who for reasons of access or influence, prefer an in-person public hearing or public information session.

**CBF urges the Committee's FAVORABLE report on SB 171.**

Maryland Office • Philip Merrill Environmental Center • 6 Herndon Avenue • Annapolis • Maryland • 21403  
Phone (410) 268-8816 • Fax (410) 280-3513

*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 over 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 Chesapeake and its resources.*