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Date: February 14, 2023
To: Members of the Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
From: Holly Porter, Executive Director
Re: SB 0447 – Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup – **SUPPORT**

Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA) the 1,600-member trade association representing the meat-chicken growers, processing companies, and allied business members on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, the Eastern Shore of Virginia, and Delaware supports SB 447 and urges a favorable committee report.

The chicken community has been a leader in sustainability among agricultural enterprises for over three decades. We were among the first group in the region to widely adopt solar energy, and were among the first to seriously study and implement ways in which our waste and bi-product could be minimized and reused. Chicken litter, which was once a nuisance for poultry farmers, is now a widely sought after and easily profitable soil amendment. Perdue Farms was a pioneer when they developed one of the first manure pelletizing plants in the country, whereby chicken litter was processed into dry pellets for use as fertilizer by farmers and home gardeners. This product was shipped around the country, and diverted innumerable tons of chicken litter from the region. Unfortunately, it never turned a profit, and that Seaford, DE facility is once again serving as ground zero in the region for a new and exciting technology which will once again (albeit more efficiently) turn waste into a valuable product through anaerobic digestion. This technology also has major potential for the Maryland chicken community.

We at DCA fully support the use of anaerobic as one of many valuable uses for food and animal waste, particularly from poultry processing plants. This technology has been proven as an energy efficient process whereby waste is converted into clean burning natural gas and nutritious soil amendments. This is also a green technology. Anaerobic digestion diverts waste from treatment plants and landfills and reduces the need to obtain natural gas from other sources, such as fracking.

For more than 20 years, anaerobic digestion has been successfully implemented throughout the European Union and receives substantial incentives both from the EU and its constituent nations as a renewable energy source. As of 2016, there were approximately 17,500 anaerobic digestion plants throughout the EU, with most of them in Germany. These countries have seen significant decreases in food and animal waste going to landfills and treatment plants, and the byproduct is widely regarded as a green and even preferable alternative to commercial fertilizer.

Anaerobic digestion is still in its infancy in the United States, and only a handful exist in Maryland, despite the Eastern Shore having one of the highest concentrations of poultry farms in the United States. To fully take advantage of this technology and its vast potential, there is a need for stakeholders across the state and from a variety of backgrounds to come together and study how it can be implemented, regulated, and potentially incentivized. This legislation will bring together farming organizations, the chicken community, experts in the field, MDA, MDE, members of the Senate and House, and many others to recommend the appropriate implementation and standardization of this renewable energy source to the Governor and General Assembly. To be clear, this is not a stamp of



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approval or incentive program, nor does it have legal ramifications. We are simply asking to come together under an official capacity to investigate the potential of this technology.

We urge a **favorable** vote on SB 0447.

Should you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact me at porter@dcachicken.com or 302-222-4069 or Grayson Middleton at middleton@dcahicken.com or 410-490-3329.

Sincerely,

Holly Porter
Executive Director