

**MARY BETH CAROZZA**  
*Legislative District 38*  
Somerset, Wicomico,  
and Worcester Counties

Education, Energy, and  
the Environment Committee

Executive Nominations Committee



*Annapolis Office*  
James Senate Office Building  
11 Bladen Street, Room 316  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
410-841-3645 · 301-858-3645  
800-492-7122 Ext. 3645  
Fax 410-841-3006 · 301-858-3006  
MaryBeth.Carozza@senate.state.md.us

**THE SENATE OF MARYLAND**  
**ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND 21401**

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**The Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee**  
**SB 447 Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup**  
**Statement of Support by Bill Sponsor Senator Mary Beth Carozza**

Thank you Chair Feldman, Vice Chair Kagan, and my fellow members of the distinguished Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee for this opportunity to present Senate Bill 447 – Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup, and to respectfully ask for your support for this bill

SB 447 which would create a workgroup composed of all the stakeholders to identify recommendations for the thoughtful expansion of anaerobic digesters throughout the state. The workgroup would look at the design, construction and operation of these facilities; identify and examine categories of digestate produced during the anaerobic digestion, and appropriate uses to recycle the digestate; and examine options for incentivizing the use of the digestate as agricultural fertilizer and manufactured topsoil.

The digestate produced by anaerobic digestion currently is classified as an approved soil conditioner under the Maryland Commercial Fertilizer Law. The workgroup would consider incentives for the use of this organic soil amendment produced by the process.

Anaerobic digestion is a process through which bacteria breaks down organic matter, such as animal manure, wastewater biosolids, and food wastes. This process creates a product known as biogas, and when purified, biogas is a renewable energy that can be used to provide heat, generate electricity, fuel our vehicles, and create other energy products.

Anaerobic digestion is hugely beneficial to our farmers in ways that more traditional waste management systems simply do not offer. For example, anaerobic digesters can destroy more than 90 percent of disease-causing bacteria, helps keep the soil healthy, and protects local water resources by reducing nutrient run-off. It also allows farms to be more energy independent.

As an example, Millennium Farms is a 50-acre farm with an anaerobic digester facility that has been in operation in 2017. This facility converts 1,200 tons of poultry litter from the farm into a nutrient-rich soil conditioner sold under the brand name “Element Soil.” Based on the success of this facility, the operating company is currently working on building a second, larger anaerobic digestion facility in Somerset County and intends to work on various agricultural-related projects in cooperation with the University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

According to the EPA, anaerobic digesters on livestock farms generated enough energy to supply 53,000 homes in 2013 alone. That was 10 years ago. This is an untapped renewable energy source in Maryland, and the establishment of the Anaerobic Digestion Workgroup to include all stakeholders would address current and future needs of this important industry.

Mr. Chair and Vice Chair, I respectfully urge the Senate Education, Energy, and Environment Committee Members for a favorable report on Senate Bill 447. Thank you for your kind attention and consideration.