

February 26, 2024

Re: Testimony in support of HB991

Dear Chairman Korman and Members the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB991. I am Meghan Duncan, residing at 22719 Squire Land in Queen Anne, MD. I grew up on my Grandfather's black angus farm in what is now the northern portion of the Agricultural Reserve bordering the Frederick County line along Interstate 270. My husband and I retired to the Mid Shore 7 years ago, leaving our home we built in 1997 on what remained of our family farm to escape the sprawling overdevelopment of Clarksburg and Urbana. We were so happy to find ourselves back in a farming lifestyle until recently when we found out that Caroline County, and much of the Eastern Shore, has become a dumping ground for industrial sludge of unknown origins, often from out of state, that escapes regulation by its classification as a "Soil Amendment."

DAF materials and biosolids are Industrial Sludge and need to be classified as such to prevent loopholes being exploited in calling these "Soil Amendments."

Industrial Sludge/ DAF is a loose definition far too broad to protect our residents from the dangers posed to our health from chemical coagulants and flocculants, heavy metals, PFAs, PFOAs and other chemicals too numerous and expensive to routinely test for. No one knows exactly what is in every tanker truck, many of which are from out of state, and without testing and controls on every load these dangerous substances will end up in the food chain, our wells, and harm the wildlife, native and migrating birds, as well as we humans and our pets who are exposed to contaminated waters, soils, and air as farming operations produce a lot of dust carrying unknown hazards for miles.

Additionally, human wastewater treatment plant biosolids have no place in our food chain by being spread on farm fields which produce crops for poultry, livestock, and human consumption. In addition to the vast array of chemicals used in treating wastewater, prescription medications are prevalent in sewage waste, sludge which also has the potential to spread disease. Evidenced in the Covid testing done on wastewater to determine where outbreaks occur.

*The U.S. EPA's Inspector General (U.S. EPA 2000) found that, while EPA promotes land application, EPA cannot assure the public that current land application practices are protective of human health and the environment. **Land Application of Treated Sewage Sludge: Community Health and Environmental Justice*** Amy Lowman,¹ Mary Anne McDonald,² Steve Wing,¹ and Naeema Muhammad³ ¹Department of Epidemiology, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA; ²Department of Community and Family Medicine, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, USA; ³Concerned Citizens of Tillery, Tillery, North Carolina, USA

Maryland's lax regulations also lead to reckless tanker truck drivers from outside Caroline County and outside the state of Maryland who act with impunity in blatant violation of Caroline County DAF Moratoria currently in effect, bringing loads from out of County and out of State. Tankers running at all hours of the night and day are a menace on these small county roads to us all, school buses picking up and dropping off children, bicyclists, horse riders and dog walkers. Tanker trucks degrade our infrastructure in their size and weight, costing taxpayer dollars to repair roads and bridges.

I support this legislation because currently not enough is being done to protect Maryland residents from a deluge of Industrial Sludge being brought here from other states who recognize the need for strict regulations and then being stored in unpermitted tanks, lagoons and pits, and/or spread directly on our lands. I see this legislation as a stop-gap measure to curtail and regulate Industrial Sludge/ DAF/ and reclass its use as Not a Soil Amendment until more studies are done on the harm that could devastate our lands, waters and air and in so doing destroy our quality of life, health and safety.

In closing I ask that the committee vote favorably for HB991 and any amendments brought forward by the sponsors.

Sincerely,

Meghan Duncan

22719 Squire Lane Queen Anne, MD 21657