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**House Bill 886 – Environment – CAD Task Force
House Committee on Environment and Transportation
February 23, 2024**

My name is Ed Cameron. My wife, Julie, and I live in the Stoney Creek/Patapsco River waterfront community of Riviera Beach in North Anne Arundel County. We chose to build our home on the water because we enjoy water activities - swimming, boating, fishing and crabbing. I am the president of the Chesapeake Bay Power Boat Association which has some 6,500 Facebook Group Members, and have been on the board for 8 years.

We bought our home on Stoney Creek because the water here is clean, and the creek has never been closed by the AACo health department due to poor water quality to the best of our knowledge. We swim in the Patapsco and local creeks. We boat, paddleboard, fish, crab. As residents in this waterfront community, we are all sensitive to keeping the water clean.

While we understand the importance and needs of the port, we are extremely concerned about the environmental and human safety impact of dredging and dumping of contaminated material back into the water as proposed in the Contained Aquatic Disposal (CAD) plan..

We fear, that without this proposed legislation, the Maryland Port Authority (MPA) will begin dumping dredge material contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum, **PFAS**, and other toxic-forever chemicals in the Patapsco over a 20-acre area off of Stoney Creek and Rock Creek and then expand that up to 220 acres moving east towards Ft. Smallwood. These are areas where many Maryland citizens crab and fish, spend the day in the water and swim with their kids.

We attended a meeting in June 2023. MPA's science was questionable. The people who came could not answer any of our questions and their emphasis seems to have been put on marketing. Even now, they still can't answer detailed questions and they're not prepared to discuss risk assessment and mitigation. What they told us in the meeting is that they had done a pilot test in a ship slip in the harbor and it went well. These conditions aren't even remotely similar to the proposed CAD site – other than they're both in the water. We all know that the open waters of the outer Patapsco are highly turbulent in storms and with boat wakes. We know that the lightweight sediment in the dredge material they dump won't stay put. Furthermore, they don't plan to cap the dumping sites or even use a silt curtain to limit the spread during dumping.

Moreover, we know that this activity will devastate aquatic life in the dumping area and take years, if ever, to be fully restored. What we don't know is what impact it will have on our health or the greater environment. Or to the fish and crabs we catch and eat from the river and our creeks. Or to our families who swim and play in our waterways. And MPA doesn't either. And they don't seem to care. They just seem to care about making you think it's a good thing.

There are many examples where the State of Maryland has historically and proudly stood firm with regard to cleaning up and protecting the environment. Maryland has always leveraged research and relied on science-backing plans to help clean our air and protect our waters, especially the Chesapeake Bay. With the CAD proposals massive amounts of toxic material being disturbed and released into the water column so close to our communities, creating an independent task force to research and study the plan is the next logistical step.

We believe it is imperative the task force not only include subject matter experts and research scientists, it should include delegates and neighborhood representatives from Northern ACo waterfront communities on the Patapsco and connected Creeks/Rivers. There are many more stakeholders, including our local marinas; watermen; fishing charter operators; waterfront restaurants; boat/jet ski rental vendors; and kayak/paddle board rental vendors just to name a few.

The Port is an economic engine for Maryland, and so are the ACo waterfront communities. There are many questions the task force can look into, such as, what is the impact of wind, tide and boat wakes on the drift of sediment, toxins, and how far they will drift? What will be the impact of sediment and toxins on aquatic vegetation and wildlife? What other ways are available to properly and safely dispose of the dredge material on land? Where else has the CAD type process been used and what were the results?

Our boating club and the neighbors in my community share the same concerns regarding the CAD plan. So, my wife and I are joining them to fully support HB 886.

Sincerely,

Edwin & Julie Cameron
Members, Former Board Members - Riviera Beach Community
President - Chesapeake Bay Power Boat Association