

February 26, 2024

Re: Testimony in support of HB991

Dear Chairman Korman and Members of the Environment and Transportation Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to submit testimony **in support of HB991**. I am Vicki Granat and I live at 15059 Cherry Lane, in Ridgely Maryland. I worked for the federal government for 27 years and retired early due to chronic health issues. I chose to retire to the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and I absolutely love it. I have family, great neighbors and friends here. I've invested a lot in my home and backyard. I especially enjoy spending time in my backyard with family, friends, and our dogs. Although I don't personally own farmland, I am surrounded by farmland. DAF residual industrial sludge is not something I ever expected to come into my life. I'm now a long term (14 year) resident of Caroline County and this is threatening *everyone* in our community and the quality of our lives. I have a lot of respect for our farmers, the vast majority are responsible and respectful *good* neighbors and friends. I accepted that I moved to an Agricultural County, and I've learned to live with typical Agricultural smells, like manure, which dissipates in a few days. However, DAF Industrial sludge waste is nothing like typical Agricultural smells. I am currently considering relocating because I *personally* do not want to live near the horrific smell and insects, and I have many concerns.

I've watched the documentary video of the Wicomico County residents by the Wicomico Environmental Trust. The Wicomico County residents lived under inhumane conditions with the horrible smell and insects for approximately three years before Wicomico County passed legislation to restrict DAF industrial sludge open pit storage. I've read the public transcripts of both Talbot County Agricultural Resolution Board Hearings including testimonies from *many* residents living near the Foster Farm in Trappe, where DAF industrial sludge was dumped in giant piles and then over-applied to farmland. I've also read countless articles on this subject and know many other counties in Maryland have also been *invaded* by DAF residual industrial sludge. These people have had their lives ruined by people who simply don't care about what they are dumping near others while they profit from this "stuff". It's life altering and we do NOT deserve to be forced to live under the conditions that people have suffered through because of ***Maryland not having effective laws in place to protect Maryland taxpaying citizens.***

I am *very* concerned about our public health, safety, welfare, quality of life and property values living near DAF industrial sludge. The Eastern Shore of Maryland residents who live, or who have lived, near DAF industrial sludge have reported that they have suffered from numerous health related issues, including chronic respiratory problems, nausea, and severe headaches, just to name a few. They have lived with unbearable gut-wrenching smells (that do not dissipate). They have been invaded by overwhelming flies and other potentially disease carrying insects, such as midges and mosquitos. They fear that their drinking water has been contaminated and is unsafe. They have valid concerns for the Bay and our waterways due to runoff. They fear that property values will plummet, and probably have, for properties near DAF industrial sludge. The constant stream of tanker trucks going to and from DAF residual storage pits and lagoons creates a whole set of other problems for residents (and this is already a problem in Caroline County). There is also growing concern for our local economy, specifically due to this “stuff” being dumped in our communities.

There have not yet been enough studies to determine ALL the impacts this industrial sludge pollution will have on the Bay, our rivers, and waterways OR our drinking water. A lot of us on the Eastern Shore have well water and even though there are stricter regulations in place regarding DAF land application, requiring the utilization of injection methods, I am personally concerned that, especially if over-applied, the DAF sludge will leach into and contaminate our well water, leaving us with unsafe drinking water.

I truly don't understand how the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) has classified industrial sludge as a *soil amendment* without performing a life cycle analysis of the chemical composition of this “stuff” to determine the factual risks and impacts to public health and safety. I believe other states have done this type of analysis. I suspect they have found that Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances or PFA's a “forever chemical” are present in the chemical composition. Exposure to these chemicals causes an increased risk in developing cancer, reduced ability of the body's immune system to fight infections, decreased fertility, and developmental effects in children. Please encourage MDA to work with Maryland's Department of Environmental Protection to protect public health and safety, the environment, and our wildlife from these dangerous contaminants.

The Chesapeake Bay Foundation, ShoreRivers and the Chesapeake Legal Alliance are our allies. They have partnered with each other and have existing facts of what has been tested and analyzed and what needs to be done to protect the Bay and our waterways. Please *listen* to the experts and support them.

In addition to passing the bills proposed, I encourage our state legislators to ensure that Maryland laws are equal to those of Delaware and Virginia to completely **STOP** the influx of this industrial sludge from other states. I believe that DAF industrial sludge is also being mixed with manure and trucked in from Quarryville, PA. If there are loopholes, they must be closed or the people who profit will continue to haul this “stuff” in and dump it on the residents of Maryland. **We do not deserve to be dumped on any longer!!!**

I am in favor of **HB991** and SB1074 which, if passed into law, would:

- Establish a permitting program for those who haul, store, and apply industrial sludge to land.
- Require Maryland Department of the Environment and MDA to work together to develop the permit program.
- Provide additional notice and input opportunities for local governments concerned with storage.
- Require enhanced material testing so farmers know what is being applied to farmland.

I support this legislation because both the proposed House and Senate bills are a positive step and, if passed, will result in better control, oversight, and enforcement of Industrial sludge in OUR state. Please protect OUR rights to enjoy OUR lives in OUR communities. **I am in favor of passing HB991.**

In closing, I respectfully ask *you* to ask yourselves whether you would want YOUR families, friends, neighbors, and pets to live next to this horrible industrial sludge and its inherent risks and I ask that the committee vote favorably for HB991, and any amendments brought forward by the sponsors. **Thank you for your support AND your action!**

Sincerely,

Vicki Granat
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