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House Bill 886 – SUPPORT

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

My name is Susan Greene. My husband, Dan and I live in the waterfront community of Nabbs and Stoney Creek in Northern Anne Arundel County. We moved to Maryland from New Hampshire two years ago and have grown to love the natural beauty, the abundant seafood, and the joy of living in the Stoney Creek area. I am the mother of three adult children and by the time you read this, I will be a grandmother. I believe that one of the most important things that we can do for our children and grandchildren is to leave them a beautiful, healthy environment.

This written testimony is given in support of HB886 which would lead to the creation of an independent task force to investigate, study and make recommendations about the use of Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) of dredge material by the Maryland Port Authority (MPA) in a pilot project creating a CAD site in the Patapsco River near Stoney Creek. This CAD pilot project will begin dumping dredge material (contaminated with heavy metals, petroleum, PFAs, and other toxic forever chemicals) over a 20-acre area off of Stoney Creek within approximately one year. MPA plans include expanding this 20-acre sites to an area up to 220 acres moving towards Fort Smallwood at the mouth of Stoney Creek.

The proposed independent task force is a critical tool to get detailed answers about the impact of the CAD project on

- water quality in the Patapsco River, Stoney Creek and Rock Creek of scraping the clean sand off the site, dumping the dredge material, and leaving the CAD site uncovered
- aquatic plant life that will be devastated by the dredge sediment deposited on the CAD site and the sediment that then drifts throughout the mouth of the Patapsco River, Stoney Creek, Nabbs Creek, Rock Creek and nearby areas of the Chesapeake Bay
- marine wildlife (fish, crabs, oysters and other species) living in and around the CAD dump site as well as the recreational and commercial fishing in the area.
- the birds, other creatures, and people that feed on the aquatic plant life and marine wildlife that are impacted by the dredge dumping
- recreational use and potential health problems due to contact (swimming, boating, water sports, etc.) with contaminated water
- noise and disruption to the Patapsco River and Stoney Creek areas related to the dredge disposal operation

The Maryland Port Administration (MPA) Dredged Material Management Program Annual Report 2023, page 14, states

"Reviewing the Science, Responding to Stakeholders

MPA completed monitoring a CAD pilot project in 2019 and worked to evaluate lessons learned and determine next steps for the program. Planning and investigative efforts, including geotechnical investigations and hydrodynamic modeling within Baltimore Harbor, informed a proposed siting of a second CAD pilot call in a location southeast of the Cox Creek DMCF. The area was presented to the Joint Evaluation Committee, a body of state and federal regulatory agencies, in February 2023 for feedback on the project and permitting strategies.

Concerns have been raised about the proposed location for the next CAD pilot project, so the project has been paused to ensure there is a thorough education and outreach process. This will include reviewing design alternatives and re-engaging the Bay Enhancement Workgroup. Simultaneously, MPA is developing and implementing a comprehensive outreach and engagement strategy focused on CAD in Baltimore Harbor and the importance of investigating emerging dredged material management approaches. MPA remains committed to transparency, ensuring the public and regulatory and resource agencies receive accurate and timely information and building confidence that future CAD endeavors will have no adverse effects on the environment or nearby residents."

The annual report makes it clear that the work that the MPA plans to do before the CAD pilot project is initiated is mostly education and public relations. The MPA mentions the Innovative Materials Re-Use Project and they discuss it extensively at public meetings. This is a very valid approach and should be aggressively pursued as a more environmentally friendly way to deal with the dredge material. However, the MPA does not address the broad concerns about water quality, aquatic plant life, marine wildlife, and recreational use. The members of the community do not need to just be educated about the value of the CAD project - we need answers to the questions about the impacts of dredge disposal. The independent task force would make it a priority to address the concerns of the community.

It is vitally important that House Bill 886 is moved into legislation and that the task force be created. The task force should include Maryland legislators, relevant Maryland cabinet officers, MPA officials, independent science experts (water quality experts, marine biologists, engineers with experience in dredge material handling), the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, commercial and recreational fishermen, and impacted citizens.

Sincerely,
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