

House Bill 886 – SUPPORT

(Oral Testimony)

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

Mr. Chair and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to testify and support House Bill 886.

I'm John Garofolo and I live in the beautiful waterfront community of Stoney Beach in south Curtis Bay, I'm a scientist, a citizen environmentalist, and a WSA Master Watershed Steward. In April, 2023 I learned of MPA's plans to create an enormous uncapped contaminated CAD site just one mile off our shore. I was concerned about the noise and environmental and health risks and asked MPA important questions. I was also concerned that MPA had not shared their plans with the community.

So, on June 1st, I organized a meeting with 150 citizens representing Anne Arundel Patapsco waterway communities and our legislators to be briefed on MPA's plans and research and give sufficient time and attention to citizen questions and discussion. The citizens passionately expressed their concerns about CAD and asked many science, engineering, and risk questions. Unfortunately, MPA couldn't effectively answer these questions - then or now.

MPA continually states that they only need to "improve their education and outreach". But we don't need more marketing. What we need is sound and open science, transparency and accountability, and environmental justice. The citizens have stated that clearly.

Risks aside, I can't fathom that it's okay to destroy 20-220 acres – 166 football fields - of healthy riverbed in an already highly distressed Chesapeake estuary near already environmentally-distressed residential communities.

Our area in 21226 has too long been the state's dumping ground and is one of the most polluted zip codes in the nation. Our community sits within hundreds of feet of two coal-powered power plants and a sewage treatment plant and multiple polluters upstream.

I strongly Support House Bill 886 and its independent investigatory role, independent scientific expertise, and meaningful citizen and legislator inclusion.

It is of utmost importance that a great environmental injustice is not committed in the name of cost and convenience to the state. Our waterways ARE an important part of the Chesapeake. And they're the lifeblood of our communities.

Thank you for hearing me today.

John Garofolo

Stoney Beach, Curtis Bay, MD