

## **House Bill 991**

### **Environment - Industrial Sludge Utilization Permit - Establishment**

Date: February 28, 2024

Position: FAVORABLE

To: House Environment and Transportation Committee

From: Ron Hartman, Cecil County

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I **SUPPORT** HB 991 which establishes regulations and a permitting program for use of industrial sludge. This bill will set a precedent for MDE inspection of facilities utilizing sludge and require more transparency to the public regarding sludge operations in the state.

Legislation in the Maryland General Assembly to regulate industrial sludge that comes from protein rendering by “dissolved air flotation” (DAF) is long overdue.

During my 36-year career in wastewater treatment, I often sold DAF systems to industrial consumers. The system is designed to separate contaminants from wastewater by floating the scum to the liquid surface of the tank and then skimming into a collection trough. This scum/liquid sludge is often sent out for further treatment or disposal.

In Maryland, this untreated, untested sludge is being applied directly to farms fields as a soil amendment. Depending on the specific industry one might have fats, blood, feathers, floatables, etc. If I were a farmer, there is no way I would apply untreated DAF sludge to my crops.

Other states in the watershed require permits for sludge handling and application, which is why Maryland is the largest importer of DAF in the Delmarva region, receiving shipments from poultry processing facilities in Delaware and Virginia according to the recent UMD Extension report, [https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/2023-10/Summary.AWTF\\_Assessment.pdf](https://extension.umd.edu/sites/extension.umd.edu/files/2023-10/Summary.AWTF_Assessment.pdf).

I find it hard to fathom that the Maryland agencies allow this waste product to be dumped on farmer's fields without any regulation or oversight, let alone without additional treatment.

**I urge the Committee's FAVORABLE report on HB 991.**