

Senate Bill 168 – SUPPORT

**Senate Bill 168 – Environment
Senate Committee on Education, Energy, and the Environment
“Environmental Justice in Confined Aquatic Disposal Act”**

My name is Ruth Sliviak. I live on the waterfront of Rock Creek in Northern Anne Arundel County. My husband and I purchased our property over 30 years ago and built our dream home between Maryland Yacht Club and Fairview Marina 10 years ago. We have been avid boaters, water skiers, kayakers, and swimmers for over 40 years. We also enjoy crabbing and fishing in the area. We have seen so many positive changes within the 10 years that we have been living here regarding the water quality. We have 7 grandchildren who love coming to stay with us so that they can build beautiful childhood memories and play out in nature, safely. It is a common sight and part of our area’s long-term culture and history, to see families enjoying boating in Stoney Creek, Rock Creek and the Patapsco River. Individual fisherman, charter fisherman, recreational crabbers, and commercial crabbers habitually frequent these waterways.

When we built our waterfront home we had to pay almost \$100,000 in additional costs because of the storm water management requirements, Best available technology for our septic system, and the cost of reforestation to protect the bay. How can you justify those requirements and then allow MPA to disturb and destroy without regard.

The negative health and environmental damage that would sweep the area should the CAD project be allowed, would be absolutely devastating to locals’ way of life, leisure activities as well as to the natural world. I would no longer feel safe, living, swimming, or recreating in our area because of the short term and long-term effects of the CAD project. The disruption to the area would be extensive, not only affecting the water, but the surrounding residential areas and woodland habitats of native species of animals. This issue pales in comparison to the concerns of the toxicity of the material and method but is still a concern worthy of attention and consideration. The economic repercussions of instituting this project would be catastrophic to the local business community - specifically the restaurants and marinas in the area. The negative impact of this project would certainly decrease the values of our waterfront homes - affecting families, retirements, and long-term financial planning of those of us who chose to live in this community because of its beauty, stability, and safety.

I understand that the Baltimore Harbor and its shipping channel needs to be dredged and that the material needs to be removed. However, that material must be removed in a safe way and placed in a contained area that will not impact our environment negatively. The port generates billions of dollars for our State and the businesses that are here. That does come at a cost, but it certainly shouldn’t cost us our ability to have a safe environment and hinder us from living and enjoying our property and waterways.

The Confined Aquatic Disposal (CAD) will destroy an area that has rebounded significantly after years of decline. The project does not include a remediation plan in the event there is spillage whether in the water or in the air which I can’t imagine there wouldn’t be of the “contaminated dredge material” whether in the process or once in place. The “material” that is being removed to be replaced by the contaminated dredged material is needed by the Port Authority so that they use it to “fuel” their reuse program, but it is likened to strip mining. The material that is being dredged out of the shipping channels is highly contaminated with PCBs, PFOAs, and other forever chemicals and not able to be used for that purpose in its current state. What testing will be done to that material and by who, an MPA hired contractor who will be financially rewarded with a contract?

It is my opinion that Patapsco needs to have the most environmentally sensitive laws not the least. We have all worked so hard to improve our area and to see it destroyed is reckless and irrational. Why are our tax rates that same as other parts of the county that do not have any of the environmental issues that we are exposed to and forced to endure.

The efforts to restore the Patapsco River have made significant strides over the last decade and to think that it will be thrown down the drain with a project like CAD is unfathomable. The organized environmental groups working so hard, our taxpayer dollars used to support the efforts and the laws in place to improve the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers that run into it is environmental injustice at its worst!

Our area is already so overburdened by all of the years of Industry as well as Coal burning facilities to generate electricity that are causing emissions that are damaging to our health, why would we want to do more damage?

It is important that environmental justice is supported in pollution-overburdened communities near the Patapsco River and that the river, its waterways, and communities near these waterways are not subjected to further pollution risks posed by Confined Aquatic Disposal of dredge material. I STRONGLY SUPPORT SB 168 which will address longstanding environmental injustices on the Patapsco and protect pollution-impacted communities and waterways from further pollution caused by Confined Aquatic Disposal.

Sincerely,

Ruth Sliviak

Rock Creek