

Testimony in Support of HB0909
Sewage Sludge Utilization Permits - Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances -
Concentration Limits
House Environment and Transportation Committee February 26, 2025
Submitted on February 24, 2025 by 3:00PM

To Chair Korman, Delegate Stein and Committee Members,

My name is Ginger Cushing. I live in Centreville, MD, with a home on the Corsica River within the Chester River watershed. I urge a **favorable** report on HB0909.

My 30-year career as a chemist has primarily focused on developing flexible packaging solutions for food applications. Packaging chemistry has heavily relied on PFAS for various purposes. For instance, PFAS are employed to enhance grease resistance in common products like pet food bags, fast food burger wraps, and deli meat paper. The packaging industry is well-informed about the health concerns associated with PFAS, as they accumulate in our bodies through exposure. Despite ongoing research to identify alternatives, PFAS persist in our environment.

This bill aligns with federal, state, and Maryland-specific initiatives aimed at addressing the infiltration of hazardous PFAS “forever” chemicals into Maryland’s drinking water and food supply. PFAS enter wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) from various sources, including industrial, landfill, and household waste, ultimately contaminating biosolids. When spread on farmland, these chemicals pollute soil, groundwater, crops, and wildlife.

Maryland has made remarkable progress in replacing its WWTPs with newer ones that effectively treat nitrogen and phosphorus pollutants. These upgrades were undertaken even before the risks associated with PFAS contamination were fully recognized. However, ongoing and future upgrades must now consider and address these newly identified pollutants. For instance, the planning stages for a WWTP upgrade in Centreville, Maryland, highlight this point. While these plants will incur substantial costs, advancements in technology suggest that the benefits of addressing these risks now are more advantageous than the potential expenses of future remediation. I wholeheartedly support this bill because it presents an opportunity to compel planners to minimize PFAS contaminants by establishing stricter upper limits. The timing of this action is in our favor, as it presents a chance to make a significant positive impact and minimize future cleanup costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to express my views. I look to this committee to give HB0909 a **favorable** report.

Sincerely,

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