

Committee: Environment and Transportation
Testimony on: HB909 – Sewage Sludge Utilization Permits – Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances- Concentration Limits
Submitting: Deborah A. Cohn
Position: Favorable
Hearing Date: February 12, 2025

Dear Chair and Committee Members:

Thank you for allowing my testimony today in support of HB909. I have lived in Montgomery County since 1986.

Many years ago I started purchasing organic foods, particularly those that were locally grown and cultivated with regenerative farming practices. I made this choice primarily to provide healthier foods for my family and to support more sustainable farming practices.

Recently, I learned that sewage sludge was being promoted as a soil amendment on agricultural land. I was appalled. Sewage sludge, as opposed to composted food scraps, typically has high level of PFOS and PFOA. These “forever chemicals” are already ubiquitous in our bodies. This clearly is not good for our long-term health, including cognitive function.

HB909 is carefully drafted to ensure that any sewage sludge applied to agricultural fields in Maryland in the future need to be reduced to the lowest of three measurable levels measured reasonably close to the time at which the product will be applied to agricultural land.

Passage of this law will promote purchase of produce and other foods grown in Maryland since purchasers will know that the agricultural fields are, going forward, protected to the extent currently recommended, from additional accumulation of PFOS and PFOA.

To protect our health and increase the value of locally grown food, I urge this Committee to issue a FAVORABLE report in committee.

Thank you.