

Feb. 20, 2012
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To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to support SB594. It has been known for decades that inefficient agricultural fertilization is responsible for roughly half of Chesapeake Bay nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) pollution¹. EPA has stated "We estimate that agricultural animal manure and poultry litter [municipal sewage sludge was omitted] contribute about half of the agricultural nutrient load to the Chesapeake Bay."²

There is no scientifically valid reason to dispose of P at rates that exceed crop replacement amounts, guaranteeing pollution, except to foster cheap waste disposal. Nearly half the world's high-grade reserves of P ore have already been mined, and high grade P reserves will be depleted in the lifetimes of children being born today^{3, 4, 5}.

Chesapeake Bay is worth hundreds of billions of dollars annually to the Maryland and Virginia economy^{6,7} much more than the worth of the waste disposal or poultry sectors. From an economic standpoint, disposing of sewage sludge by land application is much more costly to society, including State and County revenue and loss of jobs, especially those of watermen, than alternative uses such as biofuel.

Opposition to this bill will certify to the electorate that the official is motivated by special interests and not the public good. A majority of citizens overwhelmingly support pollution reduction that will result in improved Bay water quality.

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2. Posted on the "Correspondence" page at www.VaBayBlues.org
3. Vaccari DA, 2009. Phosphorus famine: The threat to our food supply. *Scientific American* 300, 54-59. doi:10.1038/scientificamerican0609-54
4. Loughheed T, 2011. Phosphorus Paradox: Scarcity and Overabundance of a Key Nutrient. *Environmental Health Perspective* 119, a208-a213. doi:10.1289/ehp.119-a208
5. Bennett E and Elser J, 2011. A broken biogeochemical cycle. *Nature* 478, 29-31. doi:10.1038/478029a
6. Chesapeake Executive Council Blue Ribbon Finance Panel Report, 2004. Saving a National Treasure: Financing the Cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay. www.chesapeakebay.net/content/publications/cbp_12881.pdf
7. Chesapeake Bay Foundation, 2010. The economic argument for cleaning up the Bay and its rivers, Nov. Report. www.cbf.org/Document.Doc?id=591 - see cited references