

February 8, 2023

Written testimony for SB0225- Environment - Publicly Owned Treatment Works - PFAS Monitoring¹

Position: Favorable

Submitted by: Denisse Guitarra, MD Conservation Advocate, Nature Forward



Dear Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee,

Nature Forward (formerly Audubon Naturalist Society) is the oldest independent environmental organization protecting nature in the DC metro region. Our mission is to inspire residents of the greater Washington, DC, region to appreciate, understand, and protect their natural environment through outdoor experiences, education, and advocacy. We thank the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee for the opportunity to provide testimony on SB0225- Environment - Publicly Owned Treatment Works - PFAS Monitoring to require monitoring and reporting of PFAS in effluent, influent and biosolids of Publicly Owned Treatment Works (POTWs).

In particular we are in support of SB0225 to increase awareness and understanding of distribution of PFAS in the environment. As defined in the bill, PFAS chemicals are fluorinated organic chemicals containing at least one fully fluorinated carbon atom, including perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances. PFAS have been linked to cancer and other adverse human health effects. PFAS are released to the environment through industrial manufacturing and through use and disposal of PFAS-containing products and generally do not break down in human bodies or in the environment. Rather, these “forever chemicals” continue to threaten environmental and human health as they pollute waterways and drinking water. PFAS compounds have been detected in POTW treatment biosolids in multiple studies dating back to 2001.² The presence of PFAS in biosolids could lead to further distribution of PFAS and additional points of human exposure through their application to agricultural lands,

¹ SB0225- Environment - Publicly Owned Treatment Works - PFAS Monitoring. Available at:

<https://mgaleg.maryland.gov/mgawebsite/Legislation/Details/sb0225?ys=2023RS>

² EPA Biosolids Risk Assessment Development

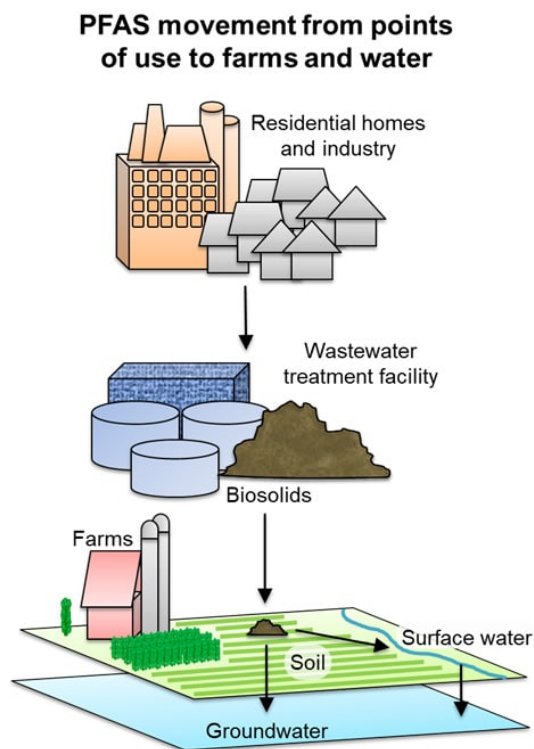
<https://www.epa.gov/biosolids/risk-assessment-pollutants-biosolids>

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2021-02/documents/biosolids-pfoa-pfos-meeting-summary-nov-2020.pdf>



landfills or incineration.^{2, 3} The U.S. EPA is currently in progress to prepare a human health and environmental risk assessment of pollutants in biosolids by December 2024;² measuring PFAS in POTWs now will provide valuable data and trends to compare against this future risk assessment. Measuring PFAS in the POTW influent and effluent will provide valuable data of the fate of PFAS in the POTW system and potential for PFAS removal or transformation.

The passage of this bill would provide a necessary step forward for Maryland in understanding the potential environmental and public health risk presented by PFAS in POTW effluent and biosolids. ANS and our 28,000 members and supporters recommend that the Senate Education, Energy, and the Environment Committee support the passage of SB0225.



Sincerely,

Denisse Guitarra, Nature Forward Maryland Conservation Advocate

Ilisa Tawney, Nature Forward Conservation Volunteer

³ Diana Oviedo-Vargas, Stroud Water Research Center (2021)
<https://stroudcenter.org/news/biosolid-soil-amendments-may-be-pathway-pfas-contamination/>