



Contact Information:

Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association
Mary Firestone, Executive Director
mfirestone@mabiosolids.org

For Immediate Release

Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association (MABA) appeals for collaboration from communities and stakeholders: Contain PFAS releases at their source - not after their escape into sewers

HARRISBURG, March 17, 2022 - The [Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association \(MABA\)](#), today announced an appeal to the regions' communities and stakeholders related to recent concerns regarding [PFAS contaminants](#) and their potentially harmful effects to citizens.

"We believe that the 'polluter pays' principle that guides many environmental protections in Pennsylvania, and across the Mid-Atlantic region, should be applied to reducing human and environmental risks from PFAS," said Anne Marek, MABA president, "And that principle relies on the idea that those who produce pollution should bear the costs of managing it to prevent damage to human health or the environment."

The phase out of the manufacture of PFOA and PFOS, two major types of PFAS, since 2011, has resulted in significantly declining levels of PFAS concentrations in wastewater and biosolids. Likewise [human blood samples](#), which demonstrate the health improvement potential of eliminating sources of PFAS compounds, have decreased. However, the continued public exposure to PFAS from ubiquitous sources during manufacture and use, including some [carpets, clothing, cosmetics, paper products, food packaging, and cookware](#), presents concern for individuals, communities, and the environment.

While the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is driving the thorough and rigorous development of [PFAS analysis protocols in wastewater and biosolids](#), they are still in development. The long standing fact remains that biosolids land application is an excellent way to recycle wastewater solids as long as the material is quality controlled. [It returns valuable nutrients to the soil and enhances conditions for vegetative growth.](#) Furthermore, the use of biosolids in land application reduces the amount of wastewater solids disposed of in landfills, costs for the community, the production of greenhouse gasses, and affords space in landfills for other types of waste.

"MABA members take pride in their adherence to quality control regulations for the biosolids they produce and apply in the region," said Marek, "And we encourage the state based environmental agencies to take action on PFAS. We want to work together with these groups to determine hotspots for PFAS across the region and work with wastewater treatment plants (WWTPs) to identify and eliminate industrial discharges to public sewers."

Pennsylvanians alone produce an estimated 2.2 million tons of wastewater solids, or sewage sludge and residential septage, each year, nearly a quarter of a ton per household. [This material has proven to be a valuable resource, when controlled and safely applied, as a fertilizer to help rejuvenate farmland, forests and](#)

[minelands](#). Many farmers in the mid-atlantic region have been able [to reduce input costs while maintaining productivity in their fields with the use of municipal biosolids](#). Land application of biosolids is a historically safe and sustainable method to achieve a functioning [circular economy that eliminates waste and enhances the environment](#).

The MABA Board issued a [position statement of biosolids PFAS to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection \(DEP\)](#) in December 2021, related to proposed changes to general permits for land application of biosolids in the Commonwealth.

The Mid-Atlantic Biosolids Association (MABA), founded in 1997, is a non-profit organization devoted to ensuring that biosolids are recognized everywhere as a valuable community resource through the communication of the benefits of biosolids resources within the wastewater community and the communities we serve.

###