

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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# ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS VOICE CONCERN WITH SOUTH BALTIMORE LANDFILL AIR POLLUTION PERMIT

## *MDE's Permit Fails to Protect Health of Local Community and Environment*

**MAY 21, 2026**—Maryland's latest air pollution permit for the Quarantine Road Sanitary Landfill in Baltimore puts people's health and the environment at risk, according to concerned community and nonprofit partners. This week, South Baltimore Community Land Trust (SBCLT), Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), Chesapeake Climate Action Network, Community of Curtis Bay Association, SB7 Coalition, and Clean Water Action submitted comments to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) as the agency considers renewing the landfill's Title V air pollution permit.

The Quarantine Road Sanitary Landfill, operated by the City of Baltimore, has an alarming history of air and water pollution. The landfill is situated among a number of problematic industrial sites that have long concerned local community and environmental groups. Toxic waste and ash from the nearby BRESCO Incinerator are often transported to the landfill through residential neighborhoods including Curtis Bay, Brooklyn, Cherry Hill, Lakeland, Mt. Winans, and Westport.

"I, along with fellow residents and workers, have long expressed concerns about potential exposure to the harmful toxins like lead and dioxins commonly found in incinerator ash disposed of at the Quarantine Road Landfill," said **Carlos Sanchez**, Lakeland resident and youth organizer with SBCLT. "We have requested that our concerns be reflected in decisions made by officials. Instead, they are both disparaged and ignored. This is no way to treat fellow human beings. We expect better and will achieve better through being unified and organized in our demand for transparency and accountability."

Quarantine Road landfill is permitted to hold 21.43 million tons of municipal solid waste. The facility's Title V permit must ensure all Clean Air Act requirements are met, including managing the facility's methane and fugitive dust emissions. However, environmental and community partners fear the current permit does not adequately monitor and limit harmful emissions that threaten public health and local air and water quality.

In their comments to MDE, partners cited the following primary concerns with the permit:

A lack of dust controls when handling and disposing of incinerator ash. Roughly 44 percent of the landfill is ash, and its toxic mix is currently unknown. The draft permit also fails to identify the origin of incinerator ash disposed at the facility. That ash can escape during the transportation and handling process and be released as fugitive dust.

A lack of monitoring for PFAS, which can be even more prevalent in air pollution than water pollution. Inadequate and unclear monitoring requirements. Partners suggest enhancements including fence-line and drone monitoring, which can help regulators easily identify elevated emissions levels and mitigate them as fast as possible.

"People deserve to know what toxic pollution they're being exposed to," said CBF's Environmental Justice Staff Attorney **Taylor Lilley**. "They also deserve to be kept safe from harmful industries by the agencies in place to protect them. There are still too many questions about what's in Baltimore's incinerator ash and how it's being handled that this permit needs to address."

There are well-documented public health consequences for residents living in this highly industrialized area of Baltimore. Asthma-related hospitalization rates in Curtis Bay and surrounding communities are roughly three times the national average. Deaths from chronic lower respiratory disease are approximately 75 percent higher than in the rest of Baltimore, and overall life expectancy is as much as seventeen years shorter than in Baltimore's most prosperous neighborhoods.

In May 2024, SBCLT, represented by CBF and the Environmental Integrity Project, filed a Title VI Civil Rights complaint with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency challenging Baltimore's failure to plan a transition away from the disposal infrastructure that underpins these inequities. EPA accepted the complaint for investigation in July 2024. Additionally, MDE's Title V air pollution permit for the BRESKO Incinerator is up for renewal later this summer. CBF, SBCLT, and other partners will be monitoring these permits and working to ensure they protect public health, air quality, and the Chesapeake Bay as intended.

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Founded in 1966, the **Chesapeake Bay Foundation** (CBF) is the largest independent conservation organization dedicated solely to saving the Bay.

**South Baltimore Community Land Trust** (SBCLT) is a community-led organization working to create permanently affordable housing, development without displacement, and zero waste in Baltimore. We believe that people directly impacted by environmental, economic, and racial injustice must be in the lead to create development and transform communities.