

Ohio House Bill 193 (HB193) is a crucial piece of legislation that aims to address the growing concerns surrounding biosolid lagoons and bio digestion facilities. These facilities, while essential for managing wastewater treatment byproducts, have raised alarms due to their potential environmental and public health impacts. HB193 seeks to establish stringent regulations and oversight mechanisms to ensure these facilities operate responsibly, safeguarding both the environment and the well-being of Ohio's communities.

When these facilities are improperly regulated and operated the cost to local communities to rectify is high. Bath Township and Fairborn have spent over \$100,000 in litigation in an attempt to have the owner, Renergy, fix issues causing uncontrolled odors and gases. One is proven to be the toxic air contaminant ammonia making living in the area horrible. Residents can't spend time outside due to the nauseating odors that burn their eyes and throat. It makes some people physically sick. People with asthma report increased breathing issues. Some of these symptoms are the same as noted in a study by the University of North Carolina which found that 75% of people living near farms that spread biosolids experience health problems like burning eyes, nausea and vomiting,

while others have contracted MRSA, a penicillin-resistant “superbug”.

In addition to polluting the air, there is the potential to pollute water resources. Improper management of these facilities has led to leaks and spills contaminating groundwater and surface water sources. HB193 directly addresses these concerns by establishing stricter standards for odor control, air emissions and wastewater management.

Soil contamination is another serious issue. While spreading treated biosolids on fields replenishes some nutrients it also spreads untreatable “forever” chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Excrement contains any number of 80,000 manmade chemicals such as hormones and heavy metals such as lead, arsenic, and mercury. David Lewis, a former EPA scientist said, “Spending billions of dollars to remove hazardous chemical and biological wastes from water, only to spread them on soil everywhere we live, work and play defies common sense.” It raises the question of how it is monitored and mitigated and who pays for it. Corporations receive tax money and credits to start their businesses, but when it comes to protecting the environment, they often fail to act as good corporate citizens. They try to avoid fines from the OEPA and courts

and often leave communities to deal with the mess they create. Although this bill does nothing to better regulate the beneficial use field application of sludge, it at least allows citizens to have a voice in the location of the storage lagoons.

As testimonies about personal issues and problems caused by the effects of these facilities mount, local communities are left alone to resolve the issues. It seems a government department, like the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency, is misnamed. The department seems powerless to protect the environment from these facilities. Local communities need bills like this to control what is in their backyards.

In conclusion, Ohio House Bill 193 represents a comprehensive and forward-thinking approach to addressing the environmental and community concerns surrounding biosolid lagoons and bio digestion facilities. By establishing stricter regulations and empowering local communities HB193 strikes a balance between responsible waste management and environmental stewardship. The passage of this bill would mark a significant step towards safeguarding Ohio's environment and the well-being of its citizens.