

# Virginia Must Directly Answer Biosolid Question

Del. Clarke Hogan is right to take all the steps within his legislative power to haul and spread Virginia's biosolid policy onto the carpet and get the commonwealth of Virginia to publicly and directly answer his simple, fundamental, crucial question: is the state's biosolid program, enforced by state regulations, reasonably well run and dealing with biosolids in an environmentally responsible way?

Well, is it?

If not, stop the use of biosolids.

If the commonwealth of Virginia isn't at all times prepared and willing to answer that basic question publicly—directly, emphatically—and document that answer, then why would anyone doubting the use of biosolids stop doubting?

If the commonwealth of Virginia isn't at all times prepared and willing to comment publicly on how well the commonwealth is doing with biosolids overall, why should those with safety concerns feel reassured? How can they feel reassured?

Good or bad PR doesn't matter. Answers do.

Understand that we aren't singling any individual state employee out for criticism. The commonwealth's employees assigned to its biosolids program are professional, are spread way too thin, and try to do the best job they can. The commonwealth of Virginia can do far better by us and by them, however, by providing sufficient

staff and funding to do the best job possible on the face of the earth. On the face of our earth, after all, is where the biosolids is being put.

If the commonwealth of Virginia isn't prepared to take all of those steps then it should take steps in the opposite direction, away from biosolid use. Especially if the commonwealth is going to continue allowing biosolids to be spread across the face of our state's earth with no local self-determination—yes or no—possible.

Better yet—best of all—provide the kind of funding needed to provide the highest level of biosolid regulation and testing—that means sufficient numbers of professional staff—but also allow localities the right of self-determination.

Allow localities to answer the question themselves. If Virginia could satisfy more people that necessary staffing and funding were in place perhaps localities might answer Yes.

Meanwhile, the commonwealth of Virginia must publicly, emphatically and unequivocally answer the question Del. Hogan posed and re-posed before getting an answer in Prince Edward last month. And be at all times willing and able to answer the same question anytime the commonwealth of Virginia is asked by any citizen of the state, whether they are members of the General Assembly or not.

—JKW—

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