

# Personal Sludge Statement

April 30, 2004

I am a sludge victim and I would like to protest in the strongest possible terms that Virginia's Board of Health and Dept. of Health cannot find time to view and respond to video taped documentation of sludge harmed victims throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. Instead these institutions, charged with protecting citizen health, turn Virginians into unwilling lab rats for government and industry. I say "lab rats" because **land application of municipal sewage sludge unlike every other product or practice on the market** that can effect health, has **never been tested** to assure public health safety. Yet our health complaints are routinely ignored and denied by health officials. Attempts to send relevant documentation to this Board, reveals my emails are permanently blocked by two members and sporadically returned by 3 to 4 others. This is shocking because the Board's mission statement says "... the Board serves as the primary advocate and representative of the citizens of the Commonwealth in achieving optimal health."

How can you represent us if you turn a blind eye to our concerns? I complained to the VDH that sludge regulations are not enforced, yet they didn't acknowledge the complaint or violations. Even in parts of the country where land application regulations **are enforced**, serious adverse health effects linked to the practice have been reported.

Because of your unacceptable refusal to acknowledge citizens plight with sludge, Mr. Williams undertook the huge financial burden of making a video to document sludge harm. He gives voice to victims who have long protested in vain to the authorities that they are coerced to endure the overwhelming putrid odors of a potentially harmful product forced upon them in decidedly undemocratic fashion. Thus **denying their rights to be free of nuisance and harm**. Forced on them in spite of ever increasing scientific and anecdotal evidence that links sludge exposure to both human and animal health problems, death, and environmental pollution.

Even as numerous counties in Virginia are currently protesting vehemently against this unsafe and unwanted program, the silence by the Virginia Department of Health and the Virginia Board of Health is deafening.

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1) Robert Bastian is a senior environmental scientist with the Environmental Protection Agency. He attended a Lexington, Virginia conference addressing sludge along with Cal Sawyer from VDH.. Together they promoted the sludge program as safe touting the very science that 2 EPA Inspector Generals reports, and 2 National Academy of Science reports have found **inadequate, out of date, and non-existent for public health**. Still on April 1, 2004 Bastian is quoted by Shannon Brennan, The News & Advance, Lynchburg, Va. Knight Ridder/Tribune Business News, saying the following:

"Bastian said he feels confident in the EPA's knowledge about biosolids, noting that the EPA did extensive research on biosolids in the 1960s through the late 1980s and concluded that it is a safe method for disposing of treated sewage sludge."

2) See <http://www.loudounnats.org/facts.htm> for additional facts questioning the safety of the sludge program.

3) The April 29, 2004 Washington Times article titled *Sludge prompts disease fears* by Sean Salai had one quote from Cal Sawyer at VDH which contains a false statement and a personal attack on victims.. This is all VDH can resort to since there is not a shred of scientific evidence to prove sludge safe. "State officials say they have investigated the complaints in Loudoun County and have concluded the findings are anecdotal and lack scientific merit. It's hard to engage in a rational discussion with some of these people," said Cal Sawyer, director of Virginia's division of wastewater engineering. "Some people believe everything is a conspiracy and there are no honest officials or businesses. They think their opinions are the only truths and everything else is a lie."

VDH did not do an investigation of the Loudoun County or Frederick County illnesses. Loudoun County Health Dept. did an "evaluation" that includes false, made up science, dates, facts and locations. No victim or doctor was ever consulted. Yet it ignores and denies relevant submitted doctor and health information. (see [www.LouounNATS.org](http://www.LouounNATS.org) scroll down to Loudoun Health Evaluation and NATS response exposing the misrepresentations) ) Please see below the letter to the editor of the Washington Times published Monday May 3, 2004:

Sean Salai's article *Sludge Prompts Disease Fears* appearing in the 4/29/04 edition of this paper ignores important facts or reports them incorrectly. Residents from around the state, not only from Loudoun and Frederick Counties, will protest in Richmond, Ms. Messick was exposed to Frederick, not Loudoun county sludge and reported 3, not 2, near fatal allergic reactions to sludge. Her doctor prescribed "Eppi Pens," a well know antidote to life-threatening allergic reactions, not "a supply of needles that she can plunge into her skin," as reported by Mr. Salai.

The more serious problem is that Mr. Salai was given stacks of information and scientific data linking sludge exposure to health problems; he ignores all of it. He interviewed 16 people who attested to sludge related illnesses. He corresponded with Dr. David Lewis who has published three peer-reviewed articles questioning the safety of the sludge program. He never mentions any of this data including the following: 1) A September 2002 EPA Inspector General's memo states: "**EPA does not know whether current regulations, when adhered to, are protective of public health;**" 2) A CDC/National Institute of Occupational Safety Health Guide for Controlling Potential Risks to Exposure to Class B Sludge: July 2002, "These enteric organisms are usually associated with self-limited gastrointestinal illnesses but **can develop into more serious diseases in sensitive populations such as immune-compromised individuals, infants, young children and especially the elderly.**" 3) On Oct.29,2003 CBS Evening news reported the EPA Deputy Administrator admitting with regard to sludge. "**I can't answer it's perfectly safe. I can't answer it's not safe, said Paul Gilman.**"

Since there is no scientific evidence to show sludge is safe for the public health, Mr. Salai is left with quoting a state official's personal attack against critics of sludge. This verifies the contention of Virginia citizens that

state and local health authorities wall themselves off from the public and from reality by refusing even to hear citizen complaints preferring to attack any citizen or scientist who dares to criticize what remains an inadequately tested and potentially harmful product.

Barbara L. Rubin, Loudoun Neighbors Against Toxic Sludge

4) See two doctors statements from Drs. Mathis and Brown At [http://www.loudounnats.org/links\\_other.htm](http://www.loudounnats.org/links_other.htm)

5) Boards Mission statement:

### **Mission, Roles, Priorities and Functions**

The Board's mission statement reads:

"The State Board of Health exists to provide leadership in planning and policy development for the Commonwealth and the Virginia Department of Health to implement a coordinated, prevention-oriented program that promotes and protects the health of all Virginians. In addition, **the Board serves as the primary advocate and representative of the citizens of the Commonwealth in achieving optimal health.**"

The Board has identified its priorities as:

#### **Prevention and Health Promotion**

Primary Care Assurance

Public/Private Partnerships

The Board has cited the following as its core functions:

Regulatory

Advising the Governor on health-related issues

Meeting its statutory mandate as specified in the *Code of Virginia*

#### **Identifying health-related issues and formulating policy**

Educating its primary and secondary customers\* about public health

Advocacy concerning health care reform

Advancing quality of life through improved health

\* The Board **identified the citizens of the Commonwealth as its primary customers**. It also listed its secondary customers as being local governments, other state agencies, the Governor's office, the legislature, corporations, and professions and local societies represented by individual Board members.