

## UPDATE ON TCLAB CONTROVERSIES – May 4, 2003

As of April 2003 TCLAB continues to conduct business with the assumption that deference should be made to the sludge industry. The Committee defends financial interests of industry to be as important as a citizen's right to expect protection of public health. This situation was facilitated by the Board of Supervisors which unanimously endorsed Lloyd Wright, a sludge applicator who does not even live in Virginia, as a committee member in spite of: 1) numerous citizen protests that members should not have financial ties to the industry about which they are making decisions; 2) the fact most other Committee members already had some form of financial connection to sludge, so industry was already well represented. The Committee continues to defend Lloyd's "financial motives" as being no worse than (balancing) Barbara Rubin's "agenda". Barbara, as a citizen representative, readily admits she has an "agenda", to protect the health and safety of Loudoun County residents. Exactly what every committee member should have as priority.

Not only were citizens against financial influences playing a role in Committee decisions, they were against researchers who have a history of close financial ties (consulting and prior history of research for financially interested parties) from engaging in possibly biased research in Loudoun County. Their past research was financed by sludge trade associations whose function it is to protect and promote the sludge industry, or by the EPA's Office of Water which promulgated the Sludge Rule and has spent the last 10 years defending it. The industry and EPA financed research and held symposiums specifically designed to support sludge and attack and disparage sludge critics. It reminds one of the tobacco research wars.

Barbara opposed these scientists coming to Loudoun County unless they were part of a joint project with independent researches with no financial/professional ties to industry or EPA's Office of Water. The TCLAB agreed this was preferable to disputed research. Barbara had extensive email correspondence with Dr. Goodfriend, Director of the Health Department (also director of the County sludge program) on the issue. In the correspondence, Dr. Goodfriend ignored the arguments of financial influence, continues to ignore existing research linking sludge to illness and death, and admits "Specifically, nowhere in my email did I state that there is any proof that the land-application of biosolids is a safe practice, just that there is no significant evidence to support that it is a health hazard." He then invited the controversial scientists to do research in Loudoun County, in spite of TCLAB's declining that particular research project. Dr. Goodfriend skirted TCLAB's decision saying any studies are good for Loudoun County. Loudoun NATS (Neighbors Against Toxic Sludge) disagree, vividly remembering the bogus cigarette industry research.