



COUNTY COUNCIL OF BALTIMORE COUNTY  
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August 2, 2022

Governor Larry Hogan  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD  
21401-1925

**RE: Departure of MD Environmental Services from Back River WWTP**

Dear Governor Hogan,

We are writing to express our deep concern over the imminent departure of Maryland Environmental Service from overseeing day to day operations and repairs of the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant.

We were grateful for your decisive action and MES's involvement in the plant after systemic negligence by Baltimore city's DPW finally produced clearly visible signs of pollution they could no longer hide from us. MD Environmental Service's comprehensive report confirmed it was worse than the City had us all believe.

MES's comprehensive June report went even further to identify a failing plant that was only half staffed with unqualified employees, missing supervisors, and a "no interview" hiring policy which brought in yet more dangerously unqualified workers.

MES's 230 page report contains the word "failure" in capacities such as "premature, or catastrophic" no fewer than 30 times. All areas of the plant's maintenance, operation and engineering process are complete failures due primarily to under-staffing and under-training.

Once MES took over operations, the plant came back into compliance, and we've seen improvements both anecdotally among our thousands of waterfront constituents and businesses, but also with proper scientific sampling by the County and MDE.

It is clear the plant will quickly fall back into dysfunction and poison our community should MES depart the understaffed plant and leave Baltimore City DPW to their own poor management practices again. The City now has a proven resume of failing to operate wastewater treatment plants as evidenced not just by Back River's plant, but also Patapsco.

The catastrophic failure of the Back River WWTP happened through poor management practices over several years. The return to proper operation can only be obtained with a long term partnership and oversight by MES moving forward until such time as Baltimore City DPW has a competently trained staff operating the plant.

Sincerely,



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Councilman Todd Crandell

CC via email:

MD Office of Intergovernmental Affairs Director Stephen E. Schatz  
MDE Secretary Horacio Tablada  
MES Executive Director Charles Glass  
Baltimore County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Jr.