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For Immediate Release - Press Statement

Delegates Nawrocki and Szeliga Grateful Toxic Waste Not Coming to MD
Plans for Next Steps to Address the Failures of Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant

Annapolis, March 28, 2023 - Delegates Nawrocki and Szeliga thank Baltimore City for taking action to push back on the EPA and stop the toxic waste from the railroad disaster in East Palestine, Ohio, from being discharged in Maryland. The health of the citizens of the Baltimore region, and the Chesapeake Bay, are the priority for all elected officials. However, the work isn't over yet; the delegates are still working with Senator Mary Washington and other colleagues to pass legislation to take a closer look at this issue.

After unified and bipartisan pushback against the EPA's attempt to override state and local control, further success was achieved when it was announced that this toxic water would not come to Maryland! The delegates are proud to have been leaders in the charge against the proposal that was announced late afternoon on Friday. The city was informed on Wednesday after business hours that Clean Harbors had selected Baltimore as its location to treat and discharge the wastewater collected from the Ohio disaster site. The delegates worked aggressively over the weekend to push back against the EPA for suggesting that Maryland was required to accept this toxic waste.

Delegate Nawrocki said, "As a member of the Environment and Transportation Committee, it was unconscionable to simply sit back and watch the EPA try to strong-arm the Baltimore area." The serious failures at the Back River Wastewater Treatment Plant have been going on for years and are well documented, with a two-alarm fire there less than two weeks ago. "No one trusts the aging sanitary sewer lines and the Back River Plant to successfully handle toxic water in a state remotely acceptable to run into the Chesapeake Bay," commented Delegate Szeliga.

As representatives of Baltimore County, the delegates' priorities are to protect the community's health and our greatest natural resource - the Chesapeake Bay.

Monday afternoon, Mayor Brandon Scott announced that the Baltimore City Legal Department had determined the discharge permit necessary to release up to 2 million gallons of water from the Ohio chemical railroad disaster could be withheld. After that, it was announced that the shipment of toxic water would not be coming to Maryland. The Baltimore City and County Councils, state, and federal elected officials were unified against the plan.

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