



Educate. Advocate. Innovate.

November 30, 2022

Dear Secretary Garvin:

I am writing on behalf of the Delmarva Chicken Association (DCA), the 1,600-member trade association representing the chicken growers, companies, company employees and allied businesses throughout Delaware, the Eastern Shore of Maryland and Virginia. We wanted to again voice our support of the Bioenergy Innovation Center's proposed anaerobic digester as we did during the public hearing on October 26.

The chicken community is the backbone of the Delaware economy, making up more than 70% of farm income and directly employing nearly 10,000 employees. And many of these employees are part of the underserved communities that have been discussed over the past couple of months; employees who are earning an average of \$66,000 in wages and benefits. In addition to providing jobs and serving our economy, the chicken community is producing food – which feeds every Delawarean and millions across the world.

DCA and its members have been working tirelessly with DNREC for years to properly and sustainably manage poultry processing, hatchery, and litter outputs in an environmentally smart manner. Our commitment to addressing these challenges could not be more apparent than our support of the proposed anaerobic digester to be located in western Sussex County, where many of our farm families live and work. This completely enclosed technology promises to not only recycle poultry industry by-products, but also transform them into an odorless fossil fuel-free soil conditioner and sustainable renewable natural gas. Each of these products are not only important to the chicken industry, but also to the Delmarva Peninsula overall as we work together to protect the Nanticoke River watershed and the greater Chesapeake Bay region.

The proposed anaerobic digestion facility is in the right place at the right time. The site has a fully permitted 20-year history in the Sussex County community, initially under the Perdue AgriRecycle name, in managing these very same by-products, first as a pelletizing plant and now as a fully permitted composting facility.

For many who oppose this facility, their reasons have been clouded in their true intent – to eradicate the poultry industry in the region altogether, destroying a way of life that currently contributes more than \$4.2 billion in economic benefit to our community alone.

With tens of thousands of anaerobic digesters throughout the world, the DCA hopes you will approve this technology for the benefit of the chicken industry, our local economy, and the environmental health of the region. We support the permits being sought for the Bioenergy Innovation Center.

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and feel free to reach out if you should have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Holly Porter
Executive Director