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Cooperatively promoting the environmentally sound recycling of biosolids and other residuals

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General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Joint Committee on State Administration and Regulatory Oversight
The Honorable Marc R. Pacheco, Presenter
The Honorable Carol A. Doherty, Presenter
Via email to: mary.wasylyk@masenate.gov and jordan.latham@mahouse.gov

RE: S-2655 -- An Act Establishing a Moratorium on the Procurement of Structures or Activities Generating PFAS Emissions)

Dear Members of the Joint Committee:

The North East Biosolids & Residuals Association (NEBRA) was established 25 years ago to cooperatively promote the environmentally sound recycling or beneficial use of water, wastewater, and other residuals in the Northeast, New England, and eastern Canada.

NEBRA's members in Massachusetts include numerous water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) – from the largest, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority, to smaller communities such as Montague. We also have members working in related businesses, providing equipment, materials, and services for managing biosolids and residuals. Collectively, these Massachusetts WRRFs clean an average of 823 million gallons per day which results in approximately 495 dry tons of biosolids produced *every day* in the Commonwealth that need to be properly managed. (More information is available at [Massachusetts — National Biosolids Data Project](#) if you are interested.)

PFAS are entering WRRFs via the wastewater collected from homes and businesses and, unfortunately, most WRRFs are not currently designed to treat/remove PFAS. PFAS has become a major concern for our members because the PFAS that comes in mostly ends up going out in the wastewater solids (or biosolids). There are three main ways of managing these materials – landfilling, incinerating and recycling into soil amendments – and none of them remove PFAS.

On behalf of our members, NEBRA respectfully submits the following comments on S-2655:

This bill, as written, would have major unintended consequences and impacts on biosolids management in Massachusetts. It will stymie innovation and new processes/facilities that are desperately needed as outlets for these materials, especially in light of PFAS.

We need to find ways of *breaking* the PFAS cycle and we are starting with removing it from drinking water. But that process also produces residual wastes that will need to be managed. Producing more PFAS-contaminated materials with already limited and shrinking outlets in the State will increase water utility costs. We need more options and innovative solutions and we need to encourage their development.

NEBRA has been studying emerging technologies for biosolids/residuals recycling and disposal in order to educate our members. Gasification and pyrolysis are two technologies that have great potential for destroying PFAS in industrially-contaminated biosolids. These processes are designed to be very energy efficient and produce valuable by-products such as synthetic gas and biochar (which can be used as a soil amendment, as a raw materials for making cement, and other end uses). We have been closely following the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's research on this and believe gasification/pyrolysis is a viable solution. We are aware of at least one pyrolysis facility operating in California where the air pollution permitting process is one of the most stringent in the country. We encourage you to study these processes, not put a moratorium on their development.

Pyrolysis and gasification could also be the replacement technology for existing sewage sludge incinerators (SSIs) in Massachusetts, most of which are approaching the end of their useful life. These innovative thermal technologies could prove to be an effective, long-term solution for managing biosolids and residuals in Massachusetts. We have learned a lot of about gasification and pyrolysis and would be happy to share what we have learned with the Joint Committee.

PFAS is probably the most challenging pollutant that the clean water sector has ever dealt with. Ultimately, source control is the most cost-effective solution. We support laws and regulations to keep these PFAS compounds out of commerce and out of the wastewater, water and solids our members need to manage. We believe S-2655 as written would stymie innovation -- just when we need it most -- and will not have a major impact on the PFAS problem in Massachusetts.

Sincerely,



Janine Burke-Wells,
Executive Director

The North East Biosolids and Residuals Association (NEBRA) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit professional association advancing the environmentally sound and publicly supported recycling of biosolids and other organic residuals in New England, New York, and eastern Canada. NEBRA membership includes the environmental professionals and organizations that produce, treat, test, consult on, and manage most of the region's biosolids and other large volume recyclable organic residuals. NEBRA is funded by membership fees, donations, and project grants. Its Board of Directors are from CT, MA, ME, NH, VT, and Nova Scotia. NEBRA's financial statements and other information are open for public inspection during normal business hours. For more information: <http://www.nebiosolids.org>.