



Good evening Mr. Chairman and members of the County Council. My name is Mary Jane Barbato-Grauso and speak to you tonight as the President of the PTA Council of Howard County representing 70 schools, 49,000 children and 28,000 PTA/PTSA members. Our motto is "every child one voice". Our mission is advocating for the quality education and well being and safety of all children. To lend additional credibility to this testimony, please understand that I have a B.S. in Bio/Chem with 15+ years experience in the chemical industry. In addition, I have an MBA with 8 years experience of Strategic Planning and Business Development.

PTA Council began its testimony on this issue in 2005 when our membership unanimously passed a motion requiring that comprehensive soil testing be conducted prior to the redevelopment of any golf course property in Howard County.

At our recent April, 2007 meeting our membership asked that PTA Council request the County Council table Bills CR17, CR18, and CR19 until adequate comprehensive testing and any necessary steps are taken so that any development of the site assures that the community and the site is safe from latent chemical contamination.

We believe that inadequate soil sampling of the area to be developed was conducted by the developer. I would like to bring your attention to a letter issued on July 11, 2006 from Department of Health and Human Services (a Public Health Service Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry) ATSDR Region 3 referencing points #2, #3, and #4 which speak to the poor soil sampling conducted of this area.

We ask you to consider the safety of the workers who will be exposed to potential contaminants as they excavate and work in the trenches and breathe the dusty air to re-grade the property, build foundations and install water and sewerage lines. In addition, consider that the surrounding residents will also be exposed to any airborne dust particles and possible contaminants. I say "possible" because there hasn't been sufficient soil testing of this area to understand if the soil is "clean of chemical contaminants".

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PTA's primary concern is that property on site is being considered for a possible new school to accommodate the student growth in the western part of the county. If the comprehensive testing is not conducted now at the expense of the owner who stands to make millions on the proposed development, then PTA will insist that the County and its school system assure the site's safety BEFORE it is considered viable for a school. Perhaps you should become acquainted with a similar situation in Los Angeles where they built a desperately needed school on a toxic site, a former oil field. The abandoned structure is now a painful symbol of over \$170 M spent in vain, as the site was condemned.

As an elected body governing Howard County one of your responsibilities is to insure the safety of its communities and inhabitants. Over the past several years we have requested this governing body to enact legislation that would make comprehensive testing of sites such as Turf Valley imperative for the safety of the community and especially children. Consistently, the County Council and its appointed bodies have skirted the issue and informed us that this was a state issue not a county issue.

PTA HAS pursued this issue at the State level, testifying in favor of two related legislature bills SB 417 and HB 352 **at which time the chair of the HB 352 informed us that Howard County can indeed address this issue.**

I would also like to bring to your attention that as a councilman—and one month prior to November's general election---Mr. Ken Ulman said that he was **"concerned about the potential chemical hazards related to the development of land which had been used as a golf course."**¹ Mr. Ulman further states that years later, those chemicals **"can continue to pose a significant threat to air and soil quality on the site and in surrounding communities."**² In addition, a letter from the state attorney general's office dated from February to Del. Maggie L. McIntosh (heads the House Environmental Matters Committee) **states that the county is not prohibited from enacting laws to require soil testing.**³

SO, here we are again requesting that this new **County Council take the initiative to pass legislation that would require the comprehensive testing and remediation of sites such as Turf Valley prior to allowing any development.** This is within Council's jurisdiction and power to carry out.

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Avoidance, or tacit approval of this development without the comprehensive testing and remediation would be blatant neglect of your fiduciary responsibility to the community and tax payers since if it is found after the development that there is contamination who will be paying for the remediation? "The Taxpayer

¹ Baltimore Sun, (a Sun reporter) Hearing tomorrow on completing water, sewer service to Turf Valley, April 15, 2007, p8G, Howard County.

² Baltimore Sun, (a Sun reporter) Hearing tomorrow on completing water, sewer service to Turf Valley, April 15, 2007, p8G, Howard County.

³ Baltimore Sun, (a Sun reporter) Hearing tomorrow on completing water, sewer service to Turf Valley, April 15, 2007, p8G, Howard County.

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