

September 8, 2015

Statement by Assateague Coastkeeper Kathy Phillips in response to EIP's new report: [More Phosphorous, Less Monitoring](#), and call for moratorium on new chicken houses on the Eastern Shore:

Good afternoon, I'm Kathy Phillips, Executive Director of Assateague Coastal Trust and your coastal Waterkeeper, the [Assateague COASTKEEPER](#). The Assateague Coastal Trust's mission is to promote and encourage the protection of the health, productivity, and sustainability of the coastal bays watershed of Delmarva through *advocacy, conservation, and education*.....**Water quality and responsible land use are two critical areas of concern to our members.**

In the fall of 2014, residents in Princess Anne, Maryland formed the Backbone Corridor Neighbors Association in order to approach their elected county officials and ask for relief from what they clearly saw as an industrialization of their rural community due in part to a combined residential/agricultural zoning district in Somerset County and because poultry growing factories (6, 10 or 12 buildings, each the length of two football fields) were being built within 200' of their kitchen doors.

The county responded that due to current zoning regulations there was nothing these people could do to stop what they saw as a destruction of prime agricultural land and a threat their health, their communities and their environment, while parcel after parcel was being developed into poultry production. You need to understand these are animal feed lot developers buying land and developing it with industrial scale poultry growing facilities raising nearly 1 million birds per year, these are not family farmers expanding their farm with a few new chicken houses.

The level of industrialization of Delmarva's rural areas due to the intensity and density of these large scale animal feeding operations prompted residents to ask for a moratorium on all new poultry operations in Somerset County while imploring their elected officials to protect the health and safety of their communities through zoning changes and adoption of health ordinances.

The Backbone Corridor group enlisted the aid of Assateague Coastal Trust, Food and Water Watch and Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future this past winter to help give them the tools they would need to again approach their Planning Commission and ask for these needed changes. This was new territory being explored on Delmarva. Most citizens feel they don't have a 'say' in what happens to their community and going up against a very powerful poultry industry is intimidating.

These Somerset residents are exerting a form of “local control” by working with their local planning boards to make needed changes to zoning set backs, which will be published for public comment this fall. The Backbone Corridor folks are still attempting to have their county commissioners form a stakeholder group of residents, county staff and public health scientists to explore the adoption of a Health Ordinance into their zoning code that would control the siting of animal feeding operations in the county.

EIP’s report substantiates the concerns of these citizens that their rural communities are being industrialized without proper oversight, and agree a moratorium is needed until the situation can be brought under control.