NOFA-NY
NORTHEAST ORGANIC FARMING ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK

Memo of Support for the PFAS in Biosolids Management Act

S.5759-C Harckham/ A.6192-D Kelles

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NOFA-NY is a strong supporter of the new bill, S.5759-C/A.6192-D, which would implement a five-year moratorium on the spreading of biosolids across New York State. This pause would allow the state to thoroughly investigate the origins of this sludge and critically evaluate the practice of land application.

“Biosolids”, or sewage sludge, is a mix of human and industrial waste, which is contaminated with “forever” PFAS chemicals,[1] microplastics, heavy metals, pharmaceutical drugs, industrial solvents, and pesticides.[2] Sewage sludge is not a viable fertilizer or soil amendment. As we learn more about the risks, the state must act to protect NY communities.

In January 2025, the United States Environmental Protection Agency released their Draft Risk Report for PFAS chemicals in sewage sludge, where they state that the land application of sewage sludge may create human health risks for those “near impacted sites”, or those who “rely primarily on their products” which includes food crops, animal products, and drinking water.[3] Across New York State, all of us are dependent on water sources near and food grown in proximity to sludge spreading. Land application of sewage sludge impacts all of our communities.

There is ample evidence that land applying sewage sludge puts our water, food, soil health, and farmers at risk with untold quantities of toxic exposure, and it’s time for New York to halt this practice and understand the damage done. Using our farmland as a dumping ground for this contaminated waste is short-sighted and puts our entire food system at risk. Halting the use of sewage sludge as a soil amendment through this state legislation is an essential first step in addressing this growing concern. We urge you to support and pass S.5759-C/A.6192-D this session.

[1] EPA, “PFAS Explained”: https://www.epa.gov/pfas/pfas-explained
[2] Wheeler et al, “Characterizing pyrethroid and fipronil concentrations in biosolids”:https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0048969725005893
[3] EPA: “Draft Sewage Sludge Risk Assessment for PFOA and PFOS”: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2025-01/fact-sheet-draft-sewage-sludge-risk-assessment-pfoa-pfos.pdf

834 Upper Front Street Binghamton, NY 13905
315.988.4000
www.nofany.org
info@nofany.org