



May 6, 2024

## An Open Letter Regarding Environmental Protection

To: Maryland Governor Wes Moore

Senator Karen Lewis Young  
 Senator William Folden  
 Delegate Kenneth Kerr  
 Delegate Kris Fair  
 Delegate Karen Simpson  
 Delegate Barrie Ciliberti  
 Delegate April Miller  
 Delegate Jesse Pippy

Maryland Attorney General Anthony Brown  
 Maryland Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain  
 Maryland Public Service Commission Chair Frederick Hoover

Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater  
 Frederick County Council  
 Frederick County Planning Commission  
 Frederick County Board of Appeals

Quantum Loophole CEO Josh Snowhorn  
 Rowan Digital CEO John Lucas  
 Aligned Data Centers CEO Andrew Schaap

Dear Governor Moore, elected and appointed officials, and industry leaders:

It is with deep concern that we have learned of a new round of environmental damage caused by the Quantum Loophole data centers project. On April 4, 2024, an MDE inspector discovered numerous ongoing violations of environmental regulations.<sup>1</sup> In parallel, a Frederick County inspector placed a stop-work order on the horizontal drilling operation “due to environmental hazards.”<sup>2</sup>

Inspectors found that multiple frac-outs<sup>3</sup> had occurred. One of these frac-outs resulted in the release of sediment, and drilling fluid, directly into a Monocacy River tributary. The drilling company did not immediately report the frac-outs as required. Nor did they cease drilling operations when they realized they were discharging pollutants into nearby waterways. Finally, the drilling company does not hold the proper permits for the work they are conducting.

These violations have been described as a simple release of “clay.” The actual pollutant is drilling fluid mixed with bore-hole tailings like stone chips and soil. A principal component of drilling fluid is bentonite, a clay-like material. While bentonite may have negligible mammalian toxicity, it is a significant threat to aquatic plants and animals.<sup>4</sup> It is also important to realize that bentonite is not the only component of drilling fluid.

It has become clear that there is one element in common among these violations. There is a pattern of misbehavior across various locations, activities, and subcontractors. Quantum Loophole is the one constant. Taken in total, these violations all suggest a corporate climate of disregard for environmental protection. This culture of environmental disregard seems to have also been continued through the work of Quantum Loophole's subcontractors.

At this point the community, at large, requires something more than platitudes and vague assurances. “We promise to do better” is no longer sufficient. We *expect* rigorous enforcement of all environmental regulations. We *hope* that strict enforcement will lead to full compliance and prevent future violations.

We call on all parties involved, public and private sector, to take action to end this continuing pattern of environmental damage. Regulators should be demanding a higher standard from Quantum Loophole, and its subcontractors. State and county leaders should strictly enforce our already strong environmental laws. Finally, the General Assembly should begin work on robust new regulations to prevent this and other environmental degradation from this new industry.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G7ngYBIrrQ\\_t24n8oL5irKg1XZnLO31f/view?usp=share\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1G7ngYBIrrQ_t24n8oL5irKg1XZnLO31f/view?usp=share_link)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/continuing\\_coverage/quantum\\_loophole/county-orders-pause-to-drilling-related-to-quantum-loophole-fiber-installation-near-buckeystown/article\\_3a675102-1c8b-5c96-a8ee-1e897fb00b87.html](https://www.fredericknewspost.com/news/continuing_coverage/quantum_loophole/county-orders-pause-to-drilling-related-to-quantum-loophole-fiber-installation-near-buckeystown/article_3a675102-1c8b-5c96-a8ee-1e897fb00b87.html)

<sup>3</sup> A pressurized unplanned release of drilling fluid from the borehole into the surrounding environment.

<sup>4</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27809675/> And <https://dep.nj.gov/wp-content/uploads/sab/sab-hdd.pdf>

Respectfully,

Steve Findlay  
Sugarloaf Citizens Association

Cecilia Plante  
Co-chair  
Maryland Legislative Coalition.

Caroline Taylor  
Executive Director  
Montgomery Countryside Alliance

Dave Arndt  
Co-Chair  
MLC Climate Justice Wing

Evan Isaacson  
Senior Attorney  
Chesapeake Legal Alliance

Sonia Demiray  
Founder  
Climate Communications Coalition

Denisse Guitarra  
MD Conservation Advocate  
Nature Forward

Robin Broder  
Deputy Director  
Waterkeepers Chesapeake

Rhonda Kranz  
Takoma Park Mobilization Environment  
Committee

Betty Law  
Chair  
Fellowship of Scientists and Engineers

Steve Black  
President  
Sugarloaf Alliance

Kerri Hesley  
Sierra Club Catoctin Group

Anna Mudd  
Senior Policy Director  
Potomac Conservancy

Matt Stegman  
MD Staff Attorney  
Chesapeake Bay Foundation

Elizabeth Bauer  
Board Chair  
Envision Frederick County

Dean Naujoks  
Potomac Riverkeeper

Kathy White  
Friends of Rural Roads

Dr. Edwin Grayzeck  
Interim Chair  
Climate Change Working Group of  
Frederick County

Kevin Sellner and Steve Jakubczyk,  
Co-leads  
Citizens for Responsible Growth

James Wagner  
Plant the Light

Karen Cannon  
Executive Director  
Mobilize Frederick

Doneby Smith  
Green Sanctuary Committee  
Unitarian Universalist Church of Silver  
Spring

cc: Frederick News Post, The Baltimore Sun, The Baltimore Banner, The Washington Post,  
Chesapeake Bay Journal, Maryland Matters, Data Center Dynamics, Data Center Frontier