

# Sussex County Zoning Commission Disregards Public Opposition in Controversial Factory Farm Biogas Scheme

Continuing a worrisome trend of disregard for public input, Commission recommends approval of dirty factory farm biogas facility

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## For Immediate Release

**Dover, DE** — Despite an outpouring of public opposition, the Sussex County Planning & Zoning Commission voted yesterday to recommend approval of Bioenergy DevCo's proposed factory farm biogas facility near Seaford. The Commission's decision comes one month after a public hearing where it became clear that the company's plans have been woefully under-researched, and that certain County officials appeared less concerned about understanding the proposal's potential impacts than about catering to the developer's request for a blank check.

Initially framed as a way to manage manure from the region's poultry industry, or "poultry litter," Bioenergy DevCo flip-flopped on that central detail during the public hearing last month - a fact which Commissioners seemed happy to overlook. Instead of planning to handle poultry litter, Bioenergy revealed that its proposed gas production facility would instead operate almost exclusively on sludge from Perdue's chicken slaughter and processing plants. This sludge, also referred to as "Dissolved Air Floatation scum" or "DAF scum," is the waste left over from Perdue's slaughterhouse operations and could contain a mixture of pollutants and chemicals.

The Commission's move to endorse Bioenergy's trojan horse plans shows a lack of respect for concerned residents that would live near this plant, breath its polluted air and deal with any increased traffic or other impacts. Despite serious questions remaining unanswered, the Planning & Zoning Commission elected to endorse the project. Community advocates turn next to the Sussex County Council hearing on March 16, to make their voices heard.

"The public hearing earlier this month confirmed that important questions remain unanswered about the full scope of what this project would mean for Sussex County residents and the local environment," **said Food & Water Action Delaware Organizer Greg Layton.** "As Bioenergy DevCo moves forward to build its factory farm biogas plant, robust local opposition will remain steadfast. Bioenergy's plans to transform this site into Perdue's industrial waste dumping ground for the entire region is a dangerous path for the County Council to proceed along. They must say no to Bioenergy."

"When a company cannot look 100+ local advocates in the face and tell us what they plan to build in our community, we have a problem," **said Maria Payan Senior Regional Representative of the Socially Responsible Agriculture Project.** "Bioenergy's plans are irresponsible, poorly communicated and unwelcome in Sussex County. The County Commission's decision to proceed despite public outcry tells us everything we need to know about who has their ear. We call on our Sussex County Council to stand up for those that elected them — stop this corporate factory farm enabler before their buildout starts."

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