

Dear Mr. Bahr,

I became a citizen of America in 2016. I am now an English American who lives in Clarksville, MD.

Some years ago, when volunteering with Blue Water Baltimore, I was disgusted to learn that during storm surges, sewage flows into homes in Baltimore from a huge sewage back-up under the city due to a collapsing system.

I am disappointed to hear from Blue Water Baltimore that this problem has not been resolved and it makes me angry. On one visit to Baltimore, I saw faeces floating in the water of the harbour. Worse I saw children paddling at the water's edge not far from the floating poop. Hardly, 'Charm City' for residents or tourists. I'm surprised that the homes impacted have not been condemned as unfit for human habitation and occupants offered alternative accommodation whilst the back-up is cleared and the system repaired. It has to be done.

In a recent email from Blue Water Baltimore, I read that the city is still struggling with this problem and this organisation is still fighting to achieve solutions. I understand that COVID-19 virus has been found in sewage and that is how scientists are tracking some outbreaks. You could have a storm surge into homes during this pandemic and set off a whole new spread of virus. Even without that risk, this situation is far from acceptable for a wealthy and civilised country. I am sure I don't need to tell you that sewage lets off air-borne contaminants along with the physical contaminants. I'm sure you know that inhaling the vapours emitted by raw sewage can lead to gastroenteritis, which is commonly associated with fever, vomiting, cramping, and potentially death if left untreated. How many American lives have to be lost before this is taken more seriously?

Blue Water Baltimore tells me that proposed permits for the municipal separate stormwater sewage system use ineffective solution and give a pass to polluters. They are asking for stronger permits which account for climate change. Now is the time to do the right thing and save American lives both today and in the years to come.

Yours sincerely,

Sally Jones