

MidAtlantic Association of Cleaners

16917 MacDuff Avenue
Olney, MD 20832-2959

MidAtlanticAssociation@comcast.net

301-570-3000
800-235-8360

June 17, 2008

The Honorable John Watkins
Senator
Virginia General Assembly
P.O. Box 159
Midlothian, VA 23113-0150

The Honorable Terrie Suit
Delegate
Virginia General Assembly
P.O. Box 406
Richmond, VA 23218

Re: HB 1408 – Betterment Statute Could Help Cleanup Drycleaning Stores

Dear Senator Watkins and Delegate Suit:

I am the Executive Director of the MidAtlantic Association of Cleaners, which is the regional affiliate of the Drycleaning and Laundry Institute International and serves the Drycleaning Industries of Virginia, Maryland, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. MAC is a trade association comprised of some 400 member plants and stores, including approximately 200 units in Virginia that employ roughly 1,200 personnel.

Per my conversation with NatLUST's Lindsay Trittipoe, I am writing in support of HB 1408, a proposed 'betterment loan' statute. This proposed statute would help our members and Virginia DEQ in their mutual goal of cleaning up contaminated drycleaning properties.

For decades the primary chemical used by drycleaners is perchloroethylene ('perc'), a chlorinated hydrocarbon. Decades ago, industry regulations, practices and equipment were not what they are today, and some of the older facilities could be potentially contaminated. Cleanups can be very expensive, sometimes running several hundred thousand dollars, and several have resulted in costly litigation.

Virginia DEQ should be commended for creating a voluntary remediation program. Unfortunately, there is often a lack of financing, so many cleanups do not get done, or cause the financial ruin of the business or the family owning the business to complete the required remediation and/or litigation.

In my view, the proposed betterment loan statute would be a net benefit to the Commonwealth and our members because it would open up additional sources of financing, which will lead to more cleanups, less bankruptcies, lower unemployment of workers and a cleaner environment!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard F. Ehrenreich

Richard F. Ehrenreich, CED
Executive Director