



For Immediate Release
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**ASSATEAGUE COASTKEEPER FILES PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT REQUESTS
TODAY**
CITIZEN GROUP FILES PIA REQUESTS TO COUNTY P& Z, AND STATE DNR

BERLIN, MARYLAND Assateague COASTKEEPER, Kathy Phillips, announced today the filing of [Public Information Act \(PIA\) requests](#) to both Worcester County Planning and Zoning and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on the matter of Worcester County Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) Case # 11-49 related to the Special Exception request by Hardwire LLC of Pocomoke, MD to allow a Military Testing Facility within the Resource Protection (RP) District zone of Worcester County.

The Board of Zoning Appeals is hearing a Special Exception case at their September 8 meeting that, if approved, will allow a testing facility for military grade explosive devices on a piece of publicly owned land near Newark, MD located within the County's RP zoning district and sited within hundreds of feet of the Critical Area and the marshes of Chincoteague Bay. Furthermore, Langmaid Road, a minor county road, will become the conduit for heavy tractor trailer trucks transporting explosives and equipment to and from the site.

"The citizens of Worcester County have had less than two weeks to become informed about this issue prior to their only opportunity for public comment, while government officials have apparently been working on this

matter for many months” Phillips explained. “We filed the PIA requests today because we feel the members of Assateague Coastal Trust, and the citizens of Worcester County, do not have and will not have adequate facts in hand on September 8, 2011 at the BZA hearing to make educated public comment.”

Phillips continued, “We feel it is irresponsible for the County to take action without informed comment by the public and should allow us time to get the documents requested, review the facts and then provide comment.

This special exception request goes far beyond the normal BZA hearing to allow a deck or shed to be constructed on a property or grant a variance for an after the fact construction violation. This is a direct attempt to circumvent proper Process and proper Public Comment on a change to our Zoning Ordinance and our Comprehensive Plan.”

Assateague COASTKEEPER will join county citizens at the BZA hearing, 6:30pm Thursday September 8 in the meeting room at the County Government Building on West Market Street to listen to the applicant’s request and during the public comment session ask for a 90 day extension of the request to allow for receipt of the requested documents and review.

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Assateague COASTKEEPER® is a member of WATERKEEPERS Chesapeake, a regional group of 15 local Waterkeeper programs in the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays watershed. You can find the Assateague Coastkeeper and Assateague Coastal Trust on Facebook, and on the website, www.ActForBays.org. For more information on the organization or to request a copy of our latest newsletter, send an email to info@actforbays.org or call 410-629-1538.

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