



## ***The Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee (CLCAC)***

**To:** Frederick County State Delegation, City and County elected officials

**From:** The Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee (CLCAC)

**Cc:** Frederick County Executive and Council  
City of Frederick Mayor and Aldermen

**Re:** CLCAC Legislative concerns for the 2015 Maryland State Legislative Session

December 2014

The Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee (CLCAC) continues to appreciate and rely upon the support of our elected officials in order to conduct its work on behalf of the citizens of Frederick County. The CLCAC's mission is to improve communication between high containment laboratories and the public. In addition, the CLCAC seeks ways to address public concerns about health and safety matters associated with federal and private laboratories.

During the past four years the public has repeatedly voiced questions and concerns about self-regulated private Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories in the community. These are laboratories that work with pathogens other than those on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Agriculture Select Agent list. These laboratories receive no independent external laboratory safety oversight. The public has a number of concerns, which start with the reality that there is no mechanism for any government entity to know the identity or location of such laboratories.

The CLCAC has been working to address public concerns for the past several years. Biotechnology is of vital economic interest and importance to the County and the State. Public trust and safe laboratory operations are essential to the viability of this industry, as well as to the social and economic well-being of the County and the State.

The CLCAC actively participated in a State-wide Department of Health and Mental Hygiene workgroup from September 2012 through early 2014. The State legislature tasked this workgroup to identify regulatory gaps and to make recommendations about how to address those gaps. The group's final report clearly outlined data and regulatory gaps and possible approaches to addressing them. However, no action has been taken by the State. The report and CLCAC comments may be found here: <http://www.cityoffrederick.com/index.aspx?NID=127>

The CLCAC continues to believe that we need to start with a basic and simple action: **Require registration of currently self-regulated BSL-3 laboratories.**

Without this registration step, it is not possible to know whether there are 3, 30 or 300 self-regulated BSL-3 laboratories in the State. Self-regulated BSL-3 laboratories work with pathogens such as drug-resistant Mycobacterium tuberculosis (TB), virulent influenza virus, hantavirus, St. Louis Encephalitis Virus, Western Equine Encephalitis Virus and others. If not properly managed these

organisms could potentially pose a significant public health risk.

This simple action of identifying laboratories should NOT require complex legislation or significant cost. It might well not require legislation at all. This action would not impose a burden on the industry or on state regulators. It would provide the State with the data needed to determine the size and scale of the question of self-regulated private laboratories in Maryland.

The CLCAC would be delighted to discuss this further. We believe this simple action would bring benefit to both the biotechnology industry and to the public. Most certainly, the State should have a mechanism for knowing what laboratories are operating in our communities.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Beth Willis  
Chair, Containment Laboratory Community Advisory Committee  
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