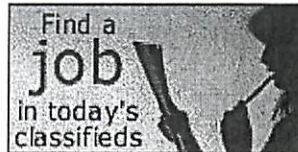


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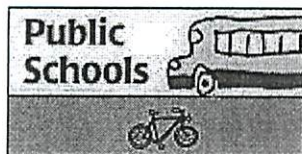
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Landfill opponents to plead case

BY PAMELA WOOD Staff Writer

For generations, members of the Queen family have lived a quiet life in the rural community of Wilson Town, where St. John AME Zion Church is the center of the neighborhood.

Bessie Queen has been there for 57 years, but she fears a massive rubble landfill could destroy the community she loves.

Ms. Queen and other west county residents on Wednesday asked state delegates to pass a bill that would halt the Chesapeake Terrace Landfill project that's proposed for the area. It has been the subject of legal and zoning battles for more than 15 years.

"There's a lot of history there, a lot of heritage," Ms. Queen told members of the House Environmental Matters Committee. "Wilson Town is a quaint little community. It's a community where we look out for each other, a community we want to keep the way it is."

The bill, HB 743, would modify an existing law that limits development near Bowie State University, a historically African-American college that sits just over the Prince George's County line from the landfill site. A similar bill died in committee last year.

National Waste Managers, which is affiliated with the Halle Cos. of Silver Spring, has been trying for years to build the landfill since the late 1980s, but the county and nearby residents have managed to rebuff it so far.

No one from the company testified at the hearing, but company representatives have said they think the bill unfairly targets them.

But some neighbors feel they're the ones being targeted - perhaps because there is a concentration of African-American residents so close by.

The community dates to the 19th century, when a group of Quakers donated land and a building for a church to newly freed slaves. That church - St. John AME Zion - sits directly across from the entrance to the proposed landfill.

"We're feeling dumped on," said Lisa Cor nwell, who lives on the

other side of the landfill site in the historic community of Woodwardville.

Community leader Cathy Fleshman said the landfill proposal is the perfect example of "environmental injustice."

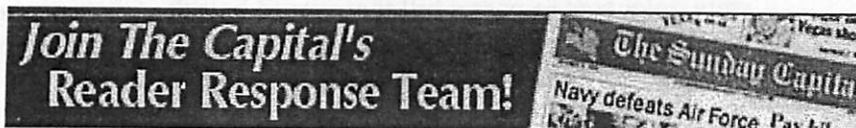
"We have continually been dumped on and our land has been stripped of its resources," she said, citing several landfills and mining operations in the area.

"How unfair is it to have another landfill dumped on us?" she asked.

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