



BLUE WATER BALTIMORE AND CHESAPEAKE LEGAL ALLIANCE ISSUE NOTICE OF INTENT TO SUE FLEISCHMANN'S VINEGAR FOR VIOLATIONS OF FEDERAL AND STATE CLEAN WATER LAWS

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Blue Water Baltimore, represented by the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, today issued a Notice of Intent to bring a lawsuit against Fleischmann's Vinegar Company, Inc. over its continued unauthorized discharge of pollutants into the Jones Falls, a tributary to the Patapsco River in Baltimore.

Acidic discharges from the Fleischmann's facility are entering the Jones Falls stream from fissures in the concrete building, which sits just 1,000 feet upstream of a popular trailhead for the Jones Falls Trail. High levels of acidity can damage aquatic life in affected waterways. Blue Water Baltimore intends to take legal action against Fleischmann's on behalf of its members, who have diligently reported these ongoing discharges and suffered their consequences for more than a year.

Blue Water Baltimore became aware of violations in September 2021, while investigating a fish kill in the Jones Falls in the immediate vicinity of the Fleischmann's facility at 1900 Brand Avenue. Blue Water Baltimore alerted Maryland Department of the Environment, who sent inspectors to the facility and found that the plant's de-chlorination system was out of order, and discovered unauthorized acidic discharges into the Jones Falls.

In October 2022, residents once again reported dead fish in the Jones Falls and a strong odor of vinegar near Fleischmann's. Blue Water Baltimore documented acidic discharge flowing through cracks in the concrete walls at the facility directly into the Jones Falls. Testing revealed that the discharge contained acetic acid, and pH levels as low as 3.72, much more acidic than the baseline level of the stream (around pH 7.5).

Blue Water Baltimore calls on Fleischmann's Vinegar Company to take immediate action to bring its Baltimore facility into compliance with all federal and state environmental pollution prevention laws including ceasing the acidic discharges seeping out of this building which are causing environmental harm.

Our action today begins a 60-day notice period as required by the Clean Water Act, after which, the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, on behalf of Blue Water Baltimore and its members, intends to pursue an enforcement action against Fleischmann's Vinegar Company, Inc. for violations of the Act and other applicable state and federal laws.



"This action puts the power of enforcement in the hands of the people," said Alice Volpitta, Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper with Blue Water Baltimore. "Local residents first alerted us to these problems, and we gathered the data to back up those observations. Now, we are exercising our rights under the Clean Water Act to hold this company accountable and protect the Jones Falls on behalf of our members."

"Fleischmann's violations degrade the local ecosystem, and hinder the public's ability to enjoy and recreate in local waterways," said Angela Haren, Senior Attorney for Chesapeake Legal Alliance. "We issued this notice with the goal of bringing the facility back into compliance as soon as possible."

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Blue Water Baltimore, home of the Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, is a local 501(c)(3) nonprofit watershed organization with a mission to restore the quality of Baltimore's rivers, streams, and Harbor to foster a healthy environment, a strong economy, and thriving communities.

Chesapeake Legal Alliance is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to providing free legal services, with a mission to apply the power of the law to protect and restore clean water and promote healthy, resilient ecosystems for communities across the Chesapeake Bay watershed.