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PRESS RELEASE

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Attorney General Frosh, Secretary Grumbles File Complaint Against Valley Proteins *Complaint Seeks Injunctive Relief and Civil Penalties*

BALTIMORE, MD (February 2, 2022) – Maryland Attorney General Brian E. Frosh and Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) Secretary Ben Grumbles today filed a [complaint](#) in the Circuit Court for Dorchester County against Valley Proteins, an Eastern Shore poultry rendering facility located in Linkwood, Dorchester County. The complaint seeks preliminary and permanent injunctive relief and civil penalties for violations of Maryland’s environmental laws and regulations.

In required discharge monitoring reports from April 2019 through October 2021, Valley Proteins reported 40 effluent violations over a period of 598 days. Inspections conducted by MDE from January 2019 through January 2022 revealed additional violations, including pollutants in a position likely to pollute waters of the State, including into a nearby tributary of the Transquaking River; failure to implement stormwater pollution plan best management practices; numerous violations of total residual chlorine exceedances; unauthorized discharges of wastewater, sludge, and solids; and failure to operate the wastewater treatment plant with a certified operator.

“We intend to prove that Valley Proteins has violated the law and put at risk fragile ecosystems and the waters of the state,” said Attorney General Frosh. “The complaint seeks to hold Valley Proteins accountable for the harm it has caused and to ensure that it does no further damage.”

“The Valley Proteins facility’s recent compliance record indicates a pattern of improper operations and poor decision making that threatens our water and air quality,” said Maryland Environment Secretary Ben Grumbles. “When significant violations are observed, MDE has an obligation to take equitable and timely enforcement action to ensure environmental accountability and to deter future violations.”

Recent air quality inspections by MDE also uncovered 89 parametric monitoring deviations on the air pollution control equipment, as well as violations of continuous air monitoring. Valley Proteins has since installed new monitoring equipment and performed maintenance on its scrubbers. Recent follow-up inspections confirmed that the plant has come back into compliance

with its air emissions permit. However, during another inspection in October, MDE detected odors beyond the property line and there have been multiple complaints of odors in the surrounding neighborhood.

Under the terms of an Interim Consent Order issued on December 23, 2021, Valley Proteins is prohibited from discharging until the facility can comply with their NPDES permit effluent limits and can operate consistent with their NPDES permit.

<https://www.marylandattorneygeneral.gov/press/2022/020222.pdf>