

# DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

# ENVIROMATTERS

January 30, 2008

## Message from Shari T. Wilson, Secretary Maryland Department of the Environment

I am pleased to present this 2007 Annual Report of Accomplishments for the Maryland Department of the Environment. MDE is a regulatory agency, dedicated to protecting and restoring the environment and making solid, informed decisions to reduce pollution. We safeguard public health and the environment through crafting regulations, issuing permits and taking enforcement actions. We provide technical assistance for pollution control, growth issues, and environmental emergencies. Permits, Approvals, and Licenses are the core function of what we do at MDE, issuing about 23,000 permits annually and tracking them for timely issuance and diligent enforcement.

Our mission is to protect and restore the quality of Maryland's air, water, and land resources. We do this while fostering smart growth, economic development, healthy and safe communities, and quality environmental education for the benefit of the environment, public health, and future generations. MDE is working to assure the environmental vision Governor O'Malley has laid out for the State.

Marylanders are breathing cleaner air. MDE has over 100 new regulations to control air emissions, including clean cars legislation signed by the governor. In 2007 we joined the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative. MDE leads the nation in progressive approaches to combat climate change. MDE maintains a statewide network of air monitoring systems continuously measuring pollutants, including ozone and fine particulate matter. MDE also monitors industrial and mobile emissions sources, regulates asbestos, and controls radiation sources.

In the area of Water Management, MDE issues permits and inspects and maintains compliance at facilities concerning industrial and municipal wastewater discharges, coal and surface mining, agriculture, and construction of major water and sewerage facilities, dam safety, sediment

control, stormwater management, wetlands and waterways. Maryland's water quality standards are designed to protect water for recreation, fishing, aquatic plants, wildlife, agricultural and industrial usage. Much of the nitrogen, or nutrients that impacts the Bay of oxygen comes from the discharge from wastewater treatment plants.

MDE administers the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund, which provides money to upgrade wastewater treatment plants and septic systems to prevent excessive nutrients from reaching the Bay. MDE also administers the State Revolving Loan Fund— a source of low interest financing to help private landowners, and water system owners protect and improve state water quality to assure that our drinking water is safe.

Responsible waste management protects our state's land resources. MDE works with local government to implement recycling programs that prevent and reduce the generation of waste. MDE regulates facilities such as landfills and incinerators that accept waste.

MARYLAND

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# MARYLAND

MDE's Lead Paint Program works to reduce Maryland citizens' exposure to hazards. There is no excuse for a single child to suffer from lead poisoning. A decade ago in Maryland, nearly a quarter of children tested had elevated blood lead levels. Our goal is to eliminate childhood lead poisoning by 2010, by having lead-safe and affordable rental housing.

Maryland's Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP) and Brownfields Revitalization Incentive Program protect human health and the environment by requiring property owners and developers to remediate or mitigate soil and groundwater contaminants. This encourages the revitalization of industrial land and buildings. It also creates certainty with the new ownership that MDE deems the property safe for its intended use. The program has received applications for 406 sites with 184 of these sites receiving final cleanup decisions, covering 2,731 acres statewide.

Our Waste Management Administration reports that last year Marylanders exceeded state-mandated recycling rate of 40 percent. MDE has piloted a successful electronics-recycling (e-cycling) program for computer retailers and waterways.

I am proud of the work of MDE staff. Their achievements across our program areas have resulted in a high standard of environmental protection in Maryland. I am pleased to present our 2007 Accomplishments Report that reflects their hard work and dedication.

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