



## MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

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Fellow Marylanders:

During the 2007 legislative session, more than a dozen stormwater bills were introduced by the General Assembly. While Maryland has one of the best stormwater programs in the nation, we need to do more to reach our Bay restoration goals. This month's issue of *EnviroMatters* – MDE's hot topics monthly e-pub – focuses on the renewed emphasis on reducing stormwater runoff and how it is an important part of environmentally responsible growth in Maryland.

*EnviroMatters* covers this agency's position on policy issues, professional recognition, and initiatives to protect and enhance public health, our environment and the treasured Chesapeake Bay.

This spring, we featured a number of topics including: MDE's fiscal study, a renewed focus on accountability and transparency in protecting public health and the environment under the new Administration. We also celebrated the agency's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of service to Marylanders, environmental decisions made by the 2007 General Assembly, and highlighted Maryland's fish consumption guidelines.

In case you missed a previous issue, you can view our entire library of *EnviroMatters* publications online at: [www.mde.state.md.us/aboutmde/enviromatters/enviromatters.asp](http://www.mde.state.md.us/aboutmde/enviromatters/enviromatters.asp). As always, your comments and ideas are welcome.

Sincerely yours,

Shari T. Wilson



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# ENVIROMATTERS

June 19, 2007

## Stormwater Management is Crucial Part of Environmentally Responsible Development

Maryland is growing at a rapid rate - the Department of Planning estimates that our state will have 1.1 million additional residents by 2030. With more than 90 percent of Maryland's watershed draining into the Bay, we must ensure that our state grows in an environmentally responsible way.

### Why Stormwater Matters

Urban development has a profound influence on Maryland's waters and if not properly managed, makes it more difficult to restore the Chesapeake Bay and ensure water quality. As land development increases, so does the amount of stormwater runoff from impervious surfaces like roads, parking lots, rooftops and structures. Stormwater management practices help control nonpoint source pollution from entering the Bay through the use of nonstructural and structural techniques to intercept surface runoff from developed areas, filter and treat this runoff, then discharge it at a controlled rate.

With 2010 fast on the horizon, there is a renewed sense of urgency to meet the goals set forth in the Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement. Maryland has significant plans in place to reduce nutrient loadings from the State's 66 largest wastewater treatment plants, but that is only one of the major contributors to the degradation of the quality of our waterways. Looking Bay-wide, the next largest sources of nutrient loadings come from agricultural and urban development runoff.

We now have an opportunity to build on the momentum of the 2007 legislative session and take Maryland's aggressive stormwater management program to the next level.

### What is the Problem?

Currently, the Maryland Department of the

Environment (MDE) establishes stormwater control design specifications in the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual. The manual requires certain stormwater runoff volumes to be controlled on all new development projects. The design manual is adopted and implemented by local governments. The more familiar stormwater management devices, such as ponds and constructed wetland systems, can be reduced in size by using certain nonstructural or "green" practices.

### Ensuring Green Practices

We must continue to do all we can to ensure green practices are put in place. The Stormwater Act of 2007 requires MDE to revise the design standards. In July, MDE will convene a stakeholders meeting to begin consultation as required by the new law. The new regulatory proposal, with an expected December 1 delivery date, will go through a broad public comment period. While this is a very tight time frame (the last design manual took three years to develop), we all agree that prioritizing our Bay restoration goals will require getting these upgraded standards in place to benefit developers, local government and the Bay.

For more information on the Maryland Stormwater Design Manual and MDE's Stormwater Management Program, visit: [www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/WaterPrograms/SedimentandStormwater/index.asp](http://www.mde.state.md.us/Programs/WaterPrograms/SedimentandStormwater/index.asp).

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