



December 2, 2010

## *2010 -- A Watershed Year*

In 2010, the recharged effort to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay attracted wide interest and garnered many headlines, probably the most of any environmental story. The attention was well deserved. Marylanders worked diligently throughout the year to set limits on water pollution -- and plotted a course that finally puts the restoration of the Bay within sight.

But that wasn't the only good news this year. In Maryland, where the quality of our air is the best it's been in a long time, we saw signs that air pollution programs are making a real difference. We continued to help lead the way in addressing climate change by reducing greenhouse gases -- which also helps our economy and creates jobs. We made progress in cleaning up industrial sites and protecting children from lead poisoning. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) projects put people to work and provided environmental and health benefits.

An MDE initiative to improve our enforcement of environmental regulations continued to produce results: for the third straight year, the Department issued more enforcement actions than in any previous year.

And Maryland businesses and organizations shared ideas on environmentally sustainable practices through the Maryland Green Registry, a Smart Green and Growing Program that earlier this year won a national award for pollution prevention.

### **The Air**

Key provisions of the Healthy Air Act -- the most sweeping air pollution program ever in Maryland and the toughest power plant emission law on the East Coast -- went into effect in 2010. The state's major power plants met the requirement to install "scrubbers" to help meet benchmarks for reducing air pollutants.

Hot, sunny weather helps to create ground level ozone -- and the summer of 2010 was a record-breaker for heat. But the number of unhealthy air days would have surely been higher if not for our progress in improving air quality. MDE also continued to push for tougher federal standards for air quality, including regulations that would reduce the amount of ozone transported into Maryland from other states.

Meanwhile, Marylanders were finding ways to help. Hundreds came to Camden Yards on a summer Saturday to trade gasoline lawn mowers for cleaner, battery-powered models (discounted as part of a program co-sponsored by MDE).

And progress continued in addressing climate change. Maryland worked with a coalition of northeastern states to establish the start of a framework for a low-carbon fuel standard. Maryland's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), the country's first cap-and-trade program to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, has raised more than \$130 million for such initiatives as low-income energy assistance and for energy efficiency and clean energy programs that will lower greenhouse gas emissions. The program will reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the State's electricity generators by about 10 percent by 2019.

### **The Land**

Maryland continues to address needed cleanup at some of our state's most polluted sites. MDE staff worked throughout 2010 to advance the cleanup of areas at the Sparrow Point steel-making facility and successfully pushed for improved communication between the company and the community. Also in 2010, Maryland asked that the Dwyer Property, a former munitions plant in Cecil County, be added to the national Superfund list of polluted properties. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recommended that the site be added to the list.

We continued to make progress in addressing lead poisoning, the biggest -- and entirely preventable -- environmental threat to children. The annual Childhood Lead Registry report for 2010 showed that more Maryland children were tested last year for lead poisoning and fewer were poisoned by lead than in any year since figures have been collected. But, as First Lady Katie O'Malley pointed out in announcing those results, we must do more -- and that includes spreading the word that lead poisoning can also occur in owner-occupied homes as well as in older rental units.

MDE moved forward in 2010 to implement requirements of a new program to improve the management of manure at animal feeding operations. The program will reduce polluted runoff from over 500 poultry operations and help farmers comply with Federal and State laws.

## **The Water**

To meet Maryland's ambitious two-year milestones, we have more than doubled our efforts to reduce nitrogen, the most serious pollutant in the Bay. Indeed, we worked on many fronts in 2010 to improve the quality of our waterways.

We took steps to reduce pollution from stormwater runoff, the fastest-growing source of Bay pollution. Regulations adopted in 2010 require "environmental site design" -- that is, permeable surfaces, vegetative buffers, and other small-scale treatment practices to trap and absorb stormwater -- for new development.

Also this year, MDE worked to address the largest source of stormwater pollution -- our already developed areas. Montgomery County supported a stormwater permit issued by MDE that is one of the most progressive in the nation and provides a framework for similar stormwater permits for other Maryland jurisdictions.

Maryland's septic upgrade program continues to be a tremendous success, with more than 2,200 septic systems upgraded through MDE's program. Meanwhile, Marylanders continue to upgrade many of our largest wastewater treatment plants with Enhanced Nutrient Removal technology. We have upgraded 16 plants, and another 15 are under construction.

ARRA funding created and saved jobs and helped pay for projects that provided environmental and public health benefits. MDE administered the \$121.6 million for 85 clean water and green projects.

Finally, 2010 has proven to be a pivotal year in the long fight to restore the Chesapeake Bay. Maryland worked with the EPA on the development of a Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, often called a pollution "diet." We were the only State, along with the District of Columbia, to submit an adequate Draft Watershed Implementation Plan to meet that diet. After hearing and considering public comment to our proposal, we are putting the finishing touches on a refined Plan that will significantly reduce pollution by 2020 -- a self-imposed deadline five years ahead of the EPA and the other Bay States.

It is a plan that will improve our environment and public health, help create jobs, and protect the economic value of the Bay.

These are but a few of the many accomplishments this year, achievements that occurred during difficult economic times and that could only be made possible through the hard work of State employees and our stakeholders, and I thank you for all you did this year to protect the environment and public health.

On behalf of our talented staff -- scientists, administrative specialists, emergency responders, meteorologists, modelers, radiation experts, geologists, project managers, planners and engineers and more -- thank you for your work to achieve the important progress we are making. If you attended a stakeholder meeting, submitted a comment, sponsored a cleanup, sought funding for a project, reported a problem, or obtained a permit, you have improved Maryland's environment. The Department looks forward to working with you in 2011.

On a personal note, I want to take this opportunity to offer many thanks for your support over the past four years, as I recently announced my decision not to seek a second term. Serving the citizens of Maryland as Secretary of the Department of the Environment has been my honor and my privilege. I am enormously proud of our collective accomplishments and particularly of the significant progress we've made under Governor O'Malley's leadership. I look forward to following Maryland's continued achievements in protecting our air, land, water, and public health.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari T. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Martin O'Malley, Governor | Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor | Shari Wilson, Secretary



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