



**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

1800 Washington Boulevard ● Baltimore MD 21230  
410-537-3000 ● 1-800-633-6101

---

Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.  
Governor

Kendl P. Philbrick  
Acting Secretary

Michael S. Steele  
Lt. Governor

October 7, 2003

Fellow Marylanders:

In this issue of *EnviroMatters*, we look at some of the issues that will be considered by the Advisory Committee on the Management and Protection of the State's Water Resources. This able group of citizens, drawn from the General Assembly, cabinet agencies and the private sector, has been asked to examine the state of Maryland's water supply and make recommendations on how we can manage and protect it.

The Department of the Environment (MDE) has daily responsibility for the safety and quality of Maryland's water supply. It is a responsibility we take seriously; our standards and our successes are among the best in the nation. But the 2002-2003 drought reminded us that this resource must be carefully husbanded and that only planning and good management will ensure an adequate, safe water supply in the future.

We created *EnviroMatters* to keep concerned Marylanders informed about matters of importance. Your feedback is always welcome, as are suggestions for future topics.

Sincerely,

Kendl P. Philbrick  
Acting Secretary

October 7, 2003

**Advisory Committee Will Examine Maryland Water Issues**  
**Governor Ehrlich Appoints Dr. Wolman To Chair Group**

Later this month, a diverse group of Marylanders, led by distinguished Dr. Gordon "Reds" Wolman, will begin working on recommendations that will influence Maryland's policies and programs related to the management, development, conservation and protection of the state's water resources for years to come. The 21 members of the Advisory Committee on the Management and Protection of the State's Water Resources will meet for the first time on October 27, 2003.

The importance of the issues before the committee cannot be overstated. The recent severe drought in Maryland and the mid-Atlantic region reminded us of the importance of water resources and the need for good management, both locally and statewide. A wet fall and winter allowed Governor Ehrlich to lift mandatory water use restrictions in early 2003 (except in Baltimore City), but did not change the fact that steadily growing demand for water makes Maryland - indeed, all states - more vulnerable to droughts.

In the midst of the drought, 72 members of the House of Delegates requested a comprehensive evaluation of water resources in Maryland. On March 7, 2003, Governor Ehrlich signed Executive Order 01.01.2003.08, creating the advisory committee and setting a deadline of May 31, 2004 for the committee to submit its report.

Regional differences across the state will influence the issues the committee is expected to consider. For example -

- In the confined aquifers of Southern Maryland, water levels have been dropping over the long term. This has serious implications with regard to the ability of the aquifer system to meet the demands of a region of Maryland that is experiencing healthy growth.
- On the Eastern Shore, there is a need to examine the cumulative effect of large withdrawals of water from some confined aquifers to meet the needs of agriculture.
- And in the Washington metropolitan area, the capacity of reservoirs to satisfy long-term demand during periods of reduced flow of the Potomac River is a matter of concern.

We are also looking to the committee to make recommendations related to county planning. The adequacy of the water supply is of paramount importance in planning decisions - on a par with the adequacy of roads, schools and housing - and the committee's recommendations for consideration of the availability of water before committing to growth will greatly improve the planning process (an issue that the City of Frederick and Middletown, for example, are wrestling with).

And we anticipate that the committee will offer its recommendations on developing source water protection programs. When Hurricane Isabel swept through Maryland, we were reminded of both the importance and the vulnerability of drinking water supplies. Locally based programs designed to address water quality issues specific for each source of supply will help protect the safety of critical water supplies.

This committee consists of 21 members including a member from each the House of Delegates and the Senate. Fourteen members are appointed by the Governor to include representation from businesses, special interest groups, local governments, academia and public. The remaining five members are represented by the heads of the following departments or their designees: Environment, Health and Mental Hygiene, Agriculture, Planning and Natural Resources. The composition of the committee can be found at <http://www.mdarchives.state.md.us/msa/mdmanual/26excom/html/35waterr.html>.

---

For more information about **EnviroMatters**,  
contact: Shirley Garner at 410.537.3006  
or email [sgarner@mde.state.md.us](mailto:sgarner@mde.state.md.us)