

January 24, 2006

ENVIRO MATTERS

MARYLANDERS WILL BREATHE EASIER WITH IMPLEMENTED CLEAN POWER RULE

Recent years have seen great strides in controls and standards for better air quality in Maryland. The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) unveiled the Clean Power Rule at a recent Air Quality Control Advisory Council (AQCAC). As the most sweeping air pollution control measures proposed in Maryland history, the rule is designed to ensure significant emission reductions from Maryland's most polluting coal-fired power plants.

Combined with Governor Ehrlich's historic Chesapeake Bay Restoration Act, the rule makes Maryland a national leader in air and water quality. Our plan dramatically improves year round controls on power plant emissions and will take bold action to reduce harmful mercury levels. In addition to cleaning the air we breathe, the rule will reduce nitrogen pollution entering the Chesapeake Bay, 30 percent of which comes from the air. The Administration's air and water quality strategy is making Maryland a cleaner and safer place to live.

More than 90 Percent in New Local Reductions

The Maryland Clean Power Rule is designed to bring our State into compliance with federal health-based air quality standards for ozone and fine particulate by 2010. It will provide more than 90 percent in new local reductions needed to reach air quality attainment status.

Under the Clean Power Rule:

- Power plant nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions will be cut by 69 percent by 2009. A second round of NOx controls will reduce emissions by a total of 75 percent in 2012. Combined with previous emission control measures, the rule will result in an overall NOx reduction of about 85 percent since 2000.
- Mercury emissions will fall by 80 percent in 2010 and reach 90 percent in 2015.
- Sulfur dioxide emissions will be reduced by 85 percent in 2010.

Exceeding National Standards

Whereas the majority of Maryland's air pollution comes from out of state, the Maryland Clean Power Rule surpasses existing work with the Ozone Transport Commission - a coalition of northeastern states partnering on air pollution issues. None of our neighboring states have adopted rules as aggressive in the control of emissions from power plants. Maryland is one of only a few states on the East Coast to adopt a multi-pollutant rule for power plants. The Clean Power Rule is more restrictive than North Carolina's highly publicized "Clean Smokestacks Act".

Since the Clean Power Rule was unveiled on January 11, MDE has received numerous comments. Because of the number and complexity of the comments, we are taking a deliberative approach and taking the time now to analyze and thoughtfully respond to the comments and revise the rule as appropriate. AQCAC will hold a follow-up meeting in February to review the revised rule. The council advises MDE on proposals by recommending adoption, rejection or modification of the draft regulations or other matters brought before it. AQCAC consists of up to 15 members that include representatives from industry, labor, professional associations, local and regional government organizations, academia, farming, the medical community and the general public.

For more information on the Clean Power Rule, or to obtain a copy of the draft rule go to:

www.mde.state.md.us/Air/Md_CPR.asp



Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor
Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor



Kendl P. Philbrick, Secretary
Jonas A. Jacobson, Deputy Secretary

Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Boulevard • Baltimore, Maryland 21230
www.mde.state.md.us • 800.633.3101