



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

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Fellow Marylanders:

This is the second of three issues of *EnviroMatters* in which we examine the Maryland Department of the Environment's accomplishments during 2003. In the first accomplishments issue, we looked at the department's efforts to provide both information to customers and help to communities. In this issue, we examine Maryland's aggressive approach to cleaning up old industrial sites and the on-going campaign to protect children from lead poisoning.

As always, your comments and ideas are welcome. Enjoy this issue of *EnviroMatters*.

Sincerely,

Kendl P. Philbrick
Acting Secretary

Brownfields

The development potential inherent in brownfields is substantial. They are generally found in established communities, close to roads and utilities. To capitalize on that potential, we asked businesses, local governments, lenders, developers and environmentalists to help MDE simplify (and speed up) the application and approval process for the Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP). We are combining technology (a dedicated website equipped with comprehensive databases and search capability) with a hands-on approach that includes the addition of a Community Redevelopment Coordinator on the MDE staff to promote the program.

And there is more to come: The Brownfields Workgroup (chaired by Delegate Maggie McIntosh) has recommended legislation (SB186/HB294) that would enhance the voluntary program. Among its provisions, the Ehrlich Administration bill would increase fees for applying to the voluntary brownfields program and make them nonrefundable, make properties under active enforcement eligible for the VCP, speed up the review and approval process, expand liability protection for corporations and local governments and provide harsher penalties for owners who ignore orders to clean up their properties.

During 2003, the Voluntary Cleanup Program received 56 applications for 42 properties for participation in the program. Forty-one applications and 29 properties were approved for the program. Twenty-five No Further Requirements determinations and one Certificate of Completion were issued.

Lead Poisoning Prevention

Both outreach and enforcement efforts continued at a high level. During 2003, the department took 381 enforcement actions against noncompliant property owners. At the same time, MDE's efforts to conduct outreach activities and partner with the counties and Baltimore City have resulted in increased blood lead testing and better tracking of blood lead poisoning cases. As a result, childhood lead poisoning data show a continuing decrease in the number and percentage of children poisoned.

House Bill 722 Report by Local Government Agency – Noncompliance With Lead Risk Reduction Provisions was adopted by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Ehrlich in 2003, requiring local government agencies to report any known non-compliance of a property with specified lead risk reduction in housing provisions to MDE. This law increases the department's ability to identify rental properties that pose a threat to occupants and that have not complied with registration requirements. Through the assistance of local governments, more properties will come into compliance with lead risk reduction requirements and Maryland's rental housing stock will be made safer for children.