



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT  
ENVIROMATTERS

January 8, 2010

### *Looking Forward to 2010!*

With your participation, Maryland made significant progress on the public health and environmental fronts in 2009 that will have an impact for years, and even decades, to come -- despite the year's economic and financial hardships. Much of this work provides jumping off points for 2010.

In 2009, Maryland continued to distinguish itself as one of the Country's leading states taking action on climate change when Governor O'Malley signed the [Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act](#), committing to reduce greenhouse gases 25 percent by 2020. And one year after the launch of the [Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative](#), the country's first carbon cap-and-trade program has proven it works. After six successful auctions, Maryland has raised \$96.2 million for energy efficiency programs, renewable energy, technology development, rate relief, and other programs that benefit energy consumers and create "green jobs" -- even as we hold carbon emissions from power plants steady through 2014 and implement a 10 percent reduction by 2018. In 2010, energy conservation programming, implementation of Maryland's [Climate Action Plan](#), and working toward federal legislation will be key.

Like many older East Coast states, Maryland has enormous water infrastructure needs, from aging water mains to outdated sewage pipes (I highly recommend [WYPR's series](#) on this topic). In June, through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the Environmental Protection Agency awarded MDE \$121.6 million for clean water and drinking water projects across the State. Proof of Maryland's great infrastructure needs: MDE received \$3.7 billion in requests for this funding. As I write this, 100 percent of [MDE-funded water infrastructure projects](#) that will create hundreds of jobs, protect public health, and clean waterways are under contract or construction across the State.

The close of 2010 will bring the State's deadline for no children poisoned by lead. Lead is one of the most significant and widespread -- but entirely preventable -- environmental hazards for Maryland children. This year's Lead Registry reported that, while more children than ever were tested, [the percentage of children with lead poisoning decreased](#) again. In 2008, of the 106,452 children under 6 tested, 713 (0.7 percent) had elevated blood lead levels. While we've come a long way since 1998, when 5,068 children (8.7 percent) had elevated blood lead levels, we continue to push toward our goal of no children with lead poisoning. A key part of this effort is MDE's continued, regular enforcement actions against property owners who do not comply with the law.

Perhaps the biggest news of 2009 was the renewed focus on the Chesapeake Bay cleanup. After two decades of voluntary goals and far-off deadlines, we have held the line on water quality, despite a growing population, but major improvement remained elusive. With a new Executive Order from President Obama, commitments from Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia to ambitious [2-year milestones that more double Maryland's nitrogen reduction efforts](#), and orders to complete plans to put the Bay on a Total Maximum Daily Load "pollution diet" by December 2010, MDE is hard at work on tangible and accountable actions to reduce pollution in our waterways. MDE will also continue to focus on our message that the problem is not just sewage overflows and wastewater; nor is it just agriculture. Reductions are needed from *all* major sectors -- air emissions, wastewater treatment plants, septic systems, stormwater, and agriculture. Reduction efforts are underway in all of these sectors, and more remains to be done

in each.

Last year, demand for [septic upgrade grants](#) available through the Bay Restoration Fund was at an all time high, in part due to MDE's intensive outreach. Over 1,800 septic systems have been upgraded -- reducing nitrogen pollution to surface water and groundwater by over 25,000 pounds per year. In 2009, the Legislature enacted Senate Bill 554, which requires all new and replacement septic systems in the Critical Area to include the best available technology for removing nitrogen. In the latter half of 2009, we focused available funding on upgrading failing systems in the Critical Area, as required by law. For 2010, we are implementing income-based criteria to stretch the funding further.

And, after much debate, [Maryland has its first-ever controls on the management of poultry litter](#) in place through new regulations for Animal Feeding Operations and a new general permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations and Maryland Animal Feeding Operations. To date, MDE has applications from over 500 agricultural operations seeking coverage under the CAFO general permit. Together, the regulations and permit will control nutrients from more than half of Maryland's agricultural operations and are a significant step forward in protecting the Chesapeake Bay, local waterways, and our drinking water.

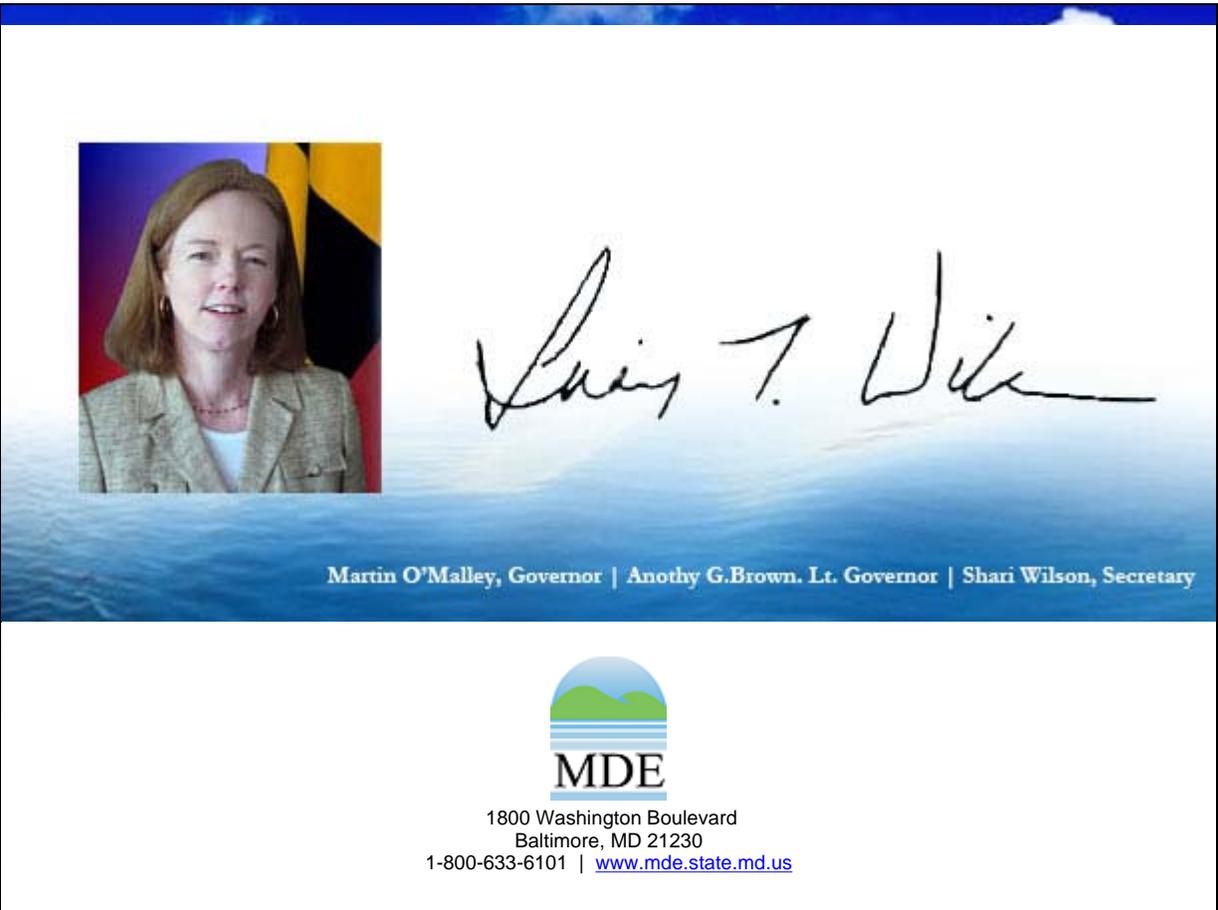
It's hard to talk about the Bay without talking about stormwater -- which, along with new septic systems, is the only major source of nutrients on the increase. Efforts begun in 2007 to use the best practices to reduce runoff from new development and to significantly upgrade the controls on already developed land are mid-stream, if you will. The [Stormwater Management Act of 2007](#) requiring low-impact design to the maximum extent practicable is in place at the state level, and over 50 local governments have drafted amendments to their local ordinances to implement the new requirements by May of 2010. To reduce nutrients from existing development, upgrading permit requirements for stormwater discharges from the largest municipalities is underway.

As part of the State's Smart, Green and Growing initiative, we also launched the [Maryland Green Registry](#), a voluntary program to promote and recognize sustainable "greening" efforts by organizations of all types and sizes within the state. Organizations large and small are signing up in droves.

On the air quality front, the news is good. Maryland air is cleaner with reduced ozone and fine particulate matter, and at the same time, the work necessary to tighten standards when health impacts are at issue continues. Implementation of the [Healthy Air Act](#) is now fully underway, with the installation of major new scrubber systems at Maryland power plants. Just yesterday, [EPA proposed lowering the standard for ozone](#) based on scientific recommendations, which Maryland supports because of the significant health benefits. This lower standard will place even more importance on getting in place a stronger federal standard to address the out-of-state transport of ozone-forming pollutants into Maryland.

The State's new requirements to regulate the safe disposal of [coal combustion products](#) are now in place. Information about the production of coal ash and other byproducts is now reported annually, and generators pay a fee that funds this new permitting program. Later this month, the State will propose regulations that identify and regulate safe reuses of ash to encourage recycling.

As we enter the new decade, filled with challenges and opportunities, I'd like to thank all of you who share this work to improve and protect Maryland's air, land, and water. I also want to acknowledge the incredibly dedicated MDE staff whose expertise, innovation in the face of resource shortages, and relentlessly positive approach make progress possible.



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



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