

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

ENVIROMATTERS

August 15, 2006

MDE Releases 2003-2006 Accomplishments Report

We are pleased to release the Maryland Department of the Environment's (MDE) 2003-2006 Accomplishments Report, reflecting our activities in the areas of initiating new regulations, enforcing state policies, and implementing new laws to protect and restore our precious environment. Many impressive actions were taken during Governor Robert L. Ehrlich Jr.'s Administration to work in a multi-agency capacity with commercial organizations and local jurisdictions to strike a balance between environmental concerns and economic growth.

Our Governor has made it his mission to sign into law important legislation regarding air, water and land to regulate our state's resources. From the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Act, to the Maryland Clean Power Rule, Lead Paint Program, Voluntary Cleanup Program and Coastal Plain initiative, MDE has educated experts and outstanding professionals who assess, implement and administer programs.

We are proud of our most important resource – our people. MDE boasts a strong work ethic, featuring top-down, bottom-up communication management to assure that state projects progress and flourish. We all work very hard for our state from our field technicians to MDE's highly-educated directors and administrators. We're here to serve the citizens of Maryland, and have an important role in this administration's environmental accomplishments.

Preserving the Chesapeake

The Bay Restoration Fund has changed the face of Maryland's wastewater treatment methods. Through the fund, Maryland's 66 largest wastewater treatment plants will be upgraded to Enhanced Nutrient Removal (ENR) levels to drastically improve water quality throughout the Bay's 64,000 square-mile watershed. Funds collected from individual onsite septic systems will go toward planting farmland cover crops to absorb nitrogen.

Revitalizing Our State

One clear example of this is the Brownfields, or Voluntary Cleanup Program. More than 1,140 acres of land were reclaimed, revitalized and put into operation in record turnaround time. This is one of the most innovative and successful efforts in mitigating urban sprawl and putting fine architecture back into useful operation in Maryland.

Assessing Water Supplies

The Coastal Plain initiative, which began last year, addresses development and economic growth with environmental concerns regarding water availability. Ensuring a safe and adequate water supply is a top priority for MDE.

Strengthening the Lead Paint Program

MDE works with local governments to identify non-compliant property owners and conduct enforcement actions to decrease lead paint risks. Last year alone, the percentage of Maryland children with elevated blood lead levels has decreased from 1.7 to 1.3 percent. Blood lead testing remains consistent, with more than 99,000 children tested last year and levels are continuing to decrease statewide.

Monitoring Air Quality

MDE's pollution control programs have prevented nearly 800 tons of ozone-forming pollutants from entering the air each day. The Healthy Air Act, signed into law this year closely mirrors the stringent air pollution controls proposed by Governor Ehrlich's Clean Power Rule. The plan cuts emission of key airborne pollutants from Maryland power plants by more than 250,000 tons annually.

Even with our limited resources, MDE strives to meet demanding regulatory and administrative activities to serve Maryland. This state being in the most geographically critical location to protect the Bay, we serve proudly and continue MDE's mission to protect and restore the environment.

The Accomplishments Report will be available online at www.mde.state.md.us/ResearchCenter/Publications/index.asp.

www.mde.state.md.us 800.633.6101

