Baltimore Harbor TMDL Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG)
February 6, 2002 Meeting Minutes

Joy Building - Tide Point Office Complex
Baltimore, Maryland

Welcome, Introductions and Announcements:

MDE's Scott Macomber welcomed everyone to the first Baltimore Harbor Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG) meeting and then turned the floor over to Fran Flanigan. Fran asked everyone to introduce themselves and any specific interests they have in the Harbor TMDL process.

A few specific items of specific interest to the group were:

Will TMDLs help or affect public health?
Will dredging be a factor in the TMDL process?
How will TMDLs affect point sources?
How does the TMDL process work and what are the major steps in completing them?

Fran then handed out a draft mission statement and a set of operating procedures for the SAG. She indicated that the group should review the hand out for discussion at the next meeting. The SAG reviewed the Draft mission statement and added a section to include public health. The draft Mission now statement reads:

"The mission of the Baltimore Harbor TMDL Stakeholder Advisory Group is to provide a forum for stakeholders to review, discuss and make recommendations to MDE on the technical, scientific, public health, economic and public policy issues surrounding the development of the Harbor TMDLs."

Overview of Maryland's 303(d) Listing Process

Charles Poukish and Matt Rowe (MDE) presented information (see enclosed copy) about the 303(d) list. The presentation covered:

- Clean Water Act Authority
- State Water Quality Standards
- 303(d) Listing Methodology
- Summary of Water Quality Impairment types
- Data Used to Identify Impairments
- Public Comment Period dates on the soon to be released 2002 list

The SAG asked several questions during the presentation, including:

Q: Kim Coble: What are the implications for the definition between pollutant and pollution?

A: Rich Eskin: If a waterbody is impaired by a pollutant, a TMDL must be completed because the impairment has a known cause. If a waterbody is impaired by pollution, the impairment indicates that not enough is known about the exact cause of the impairment. As a result of the uncertainty associated with the impairment a TMDL is not required.

Q: Victoria Woodward: Water Quality Limited Segments – is the list going by stream segments or by watersheds?

A: Rich Eskin: The waterbodies are being listed by 8-digit watersheds. Although the watershed may be listed, the whole watershed may not be affected (i.e., a small portion such as the 12-digit basin may be listed). The new format of the list will enable MDE to better focus its efforts and show people where the impairments come from (i.e. which data was used to identify the waterbody).

Q: Richard Hersey: Section 4b of the 303(d) list…what does the technical fix language in this section mean exactly? How does this affect what is listed and not listed for TMDL completion?

A: Rich Eskin: Section 4b is used to describe situations where there is a definite project in place that has a specific endpoint (both in timeframe and water quality standard) – i.e., a consent decree, or other on going environmental project. If the ongoing project will accomplish what a TMDL would accomplish (in terms of a waterbody achieving a water quality standard) than the TMDL will be foregone.

Q: Will the 303(d) listing database be available online?

A: Charlie Poukish: Yes. It is a goal. However, it is not known when it will be available to the public.

Q: Bill Stack: How will the data be reconciled between local data collection and state data collection, such as QA/QC issues?

A: Rich Eskin: Data from state monitoring studies will be used as the primary source for the assessment. Local data and information will be used to support the assessments. MDE requests that data received from local groups are submitted with corresponding QA/QC procedures.

Q: Denise Stranko: What is the size of the watershed being listed?

A: Rich Eskin: The waterbodies are being listed by 8-digit watersheds. The watershed may be listed but whole watershed may not be affected maybe just a small portion such as the 12-digit basin. The new format of the list will enable us

to better focus our efforts and show people where the impairments come from (i.e. which data was used to identify the waterbody).

Q: Why is there a discrepancy in the number of impairments for given watersheds in the old (96/98) 303(d) lists, and the 2002 303(d) list?

A: Matt Rowe: The new list contains a higher number of impairments because of the new accounting method MDE has implemented. To facilitate the improved tracking of specific types of impairments, MDE has decided to count the individual types of impairments (e.g., nutrients and metals impairments on the same waterbody would be counted as two impairments, not as one waterbody impaired for two contaminants). The result is a higher number of more specific impairments that are easier to sort and track in a database application.

Q: Brenda Afzal: Could you differentiate between bacteria and biological impairments?

A: Matt Rowe: Bacteria is an impairment as indicated as fecal coliform. (Rich Eskin – we're looking into other tests for pathogens such as E. coli or Enterococcus to get a better idea of the health implications).

A biological impairment refers to the fish or insect community within a specific habitat and how it has been affected in comparison to a reference area with the same physical characteristics.

Q: Could you give us examples of toxics?

A: Metals, such as chrome and zinc, and organics such as PCBs.

- Action item: Make sure the group gets the direct mailing for the 303(d) List public review

- Action item: be sure that everyone gets a copy of the presentation and notify the group when the 303(d) database is accessible from the MDE website.

Overview of the Baltimore Harbor TMDL Development Process

Scott Macomber (MDE) presented information (see enclosed copy) specific to the Harbor TMDLs. The presentation covered:

- The segments of the Harbor listed
- Impairments in the Harbor
- Studies that have been conducted
- Data collected to build the models used to develop loading estimates and allocation scenarios
- Calibration of the watershed model and its comparison to the Bay Program

Q Richard Hersey: Is the Back River included in the model?

A: Scott Macomber /Miao-Li Chang: no it does not include the Back River – the hydrology is different for that watershed.

Q: Bill Stack: Can we be sure that the upper parts of the watershed are included in this group (i.e. Carroll County)?

A: Scott Macomber: They were included on the mailing list and we will be sure to keep them in the loop.

Fran Flanagan: If there are people that you think should be here and are not, give us their contact information and we will be sure to invite them.

Q: Cece Donovan: Of the water quality monitoring to date, was any of conducted near navigation channel dredging sites?

A: Joel Baker: No. We avoided those areas.

Q: Bob Hoyt: Are their additional studies scheduled for the harbor or is this the data that will be used for developing the TMDLs? Also, are you planning to look at other chemical outside the ones currently on the list as impairments?

A: Rich Eskin: No we are not planning to look at other chemicals outside the realm of what has already been done. We don't have the resources to cover such a broad range of chemicals; also, the detection limits on many contaminants are very low and result in high levels of uncertainty.

Q: Regarding the Nutrient Point Source Loading Map in the presentation: What do the symbols PP and PB represent on the locations?

A: Shan Abeywickrama: PP: Point source Patapsco River PB: Point source - Back River

Q: Bob Hoyt: How deep was the sediment layer that was sampled for sediment and toxicity testing? Is that the depth that is accounted for in resuspension?

A: Joel Baker: The depth was 2cm. This is the depth at which oxygen is present and represents the biologically active zone in regards to various macro invertebrates.

- Action item: Be sure to send a map of the harbor and its watershed.
- Action item add axis units, acronym list, email group list, meeting schedule

Joel Baker of the University of Maryland Chesapeake Bay Lab made a closing statement regarding the difficulty of the task associated with developing a series of TMDLs in the Baltimore Harbor. He described the uncertainty that is associated with the dynamic nature of an urban harbor that has been utilized for multiple industrial and maritime endeavors for well over 200 years. This uncertainty is associated with complicated water movements within the harbor, historical legacy pollutant issues, and multiple current point and nonpoint sources of pollution, among other factors. He also underscored the point that the Baltimore Harbor TMDL effort is one of a handful of efforts within the country that are attempting to understand such a complex natural system in such a detailed and intimate fashion.

Next meeting May 7, 2002