

Maryland's Plan for Global Warming

Over the past year, Maryland's Commission on Climate Change and its three working groups, or "twigs" as they became known, have been one of the broadest, hardest-working groups of experts across the State.

The Commission recently released its *Climate Action Plan*. This comprehensive study put together by more than one hundred of Maryland's finest professionals shows that there are clear environmental and economic benefits to taking early action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and that, in fact, it is readily feasible. The Plan provides a "road map" of forty-two options to achieve the needed reductions.

And there is more good news. For the first time, thanks to the leadership of Dr. Don Boesch of the University of Maryland's Center for Environmental Science, we now have a Maryland-specific scientific assessment of the impacts of climate change on our State. We are very fortunate to be unique throughout the Country in this regard.

As we all know, with over 3,000 miles of coastline, Maryland is the third most vulnerable state in the nation to the rising sea levels and erratic weather patterns associated with climate change. In 2007, Governor O'Malley issued an Executive Order charging the Commission to address three key questions: what can the State's

best scientists tell us about how and when climate change will affect Maryland's citizens and natural resources, what can Maryland do to adapt to the consequences of climate change, and what can Maryland do to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases to begin reversing global warming trends?

While the Commission recognized the magnitude of the challenge, the global nature of the issue, and the need to get moving forward, I am not sure we were all certain of the exact path forward. With this Plan, we now have a road map of where to go and what the benefits will be. We can turn the corner from "this is a big challenge" to "this is what we need to do next."

The technical analyses completed as a basis for the Plan also provided a refined assessment of where our existing programs are getting us. Between the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, the Maryland Clean Cars Act, the Empower Maryland Initiative and the new Renewable Portfolio Standard, we will have more than half of the reductions needed to reduce emissions 25 percent by 2020.

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Close watchers of the emissions estimates will note the Department's previous estimate for reductions from these programs was 90 percent of the way to a 25 percent by 2020 goal. The revised estimate is based on refinement of emissions that took place during the Climate Change Commission process. We remain in good shape toward these early reductions, which are so critical.

One of the most frequent questions we have received over the summer has been about



Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shari T. Wilson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Shari T. Wilson
Secretary, Maryland Department of the Environment

whether there will be legislation in 2009 to establish a mandate for greenhouse reductions in Maryland. Most observers seem to think there will be. For the Department's part, we have been very encouraged by an on-going discussion with a number of stakeholders and would like to find a resolution everyone can agree on.

The Climate Action Plan can be accessed at <http://www.mde.state.md.us/Air/climatechange/index.asp>

Our sincere thanks go to the following esteemed Working Group Chairs and Members named below who made such a heavy lift for Maryland over the past year:

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1000 Friends
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
NPCA
WWF
Univerisity of Maryland
USFWS, Blackwater Wildlife Refuge
UM, CBL
UM, Joint Global Change Institute
ELI

Technical Work Groups of the Adaptation & Response Working Group

Existing Built Environment & Infrastructure

Sherwood T. "Duke" Brooks
Carl Bruch
Phillip Conner
Peter Conrad
Gilbert W. Dissen
Jesse Houston
Karen McJunkin
Robert Pace



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Human Health, Safety & Welfare

Rodney Banks
Ron Bowen
Lynn Heller
Joan Kean
Peter Lefkin
Ira Feldman
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Ron Bowen
Ron Cascio
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Dru Schmidt-Perkins
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Jenn Aiosa
Russ Brinsfield
Steve Bunker
David Burke
Sally Claggett
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William (Bill) Giese, Jr.
Lara Hansen
Dennis King
John Kostyack
William (Bill) Miles
Ellen Moyer
Joy Oakes
Court Stevenson

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Ed Guigliano	AES Warrior Run
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John Quinn	Constellation Energy
Michael Replogle	Environmental Defense
Matthias Ruth	University of Maryland, Center for Integrative Environmental Research
Scot Spencer	Annie E. Casey Foundation
John Szallay	BP Solar
Lise Van Susteren	The Climate Project

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Technical Work Groups of the Greenhouse Gas & Carbon Mitigation Working Group

Transportation & Land Use

Regina Aris
Uri Avin
Drew Cobbs
Nancy Floreen
Jonathan Gibraltar
Pete Gutwald
William Hellman
Pam Parker
Michael Repogle
Lise Van Susteren

Agriculture, Forestry & Waste Management

Gary Allen
Val Connelly
Joel Dunn
Bob Ensor
George Kelly
Laura Miller
Cindy Parker
James Remuzzi
Eric Sprague
Elmer Weibley

Cross-Cutting Issues

Misty Allen
Paul Chan
Robert Driscoll
Joel Dunn
Frank Heintz
Julian Levy
Michael Mallinoff
Elizabeth Martin-Perera
Adrienne Ottaviani
Cindy Parker
John Quinn
Scot Spencer

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Energy Supply

Misty Allen
Randy Cain
Eric Coffman
Bill Cunningham
Richard D'Amato
Robert Driscoll
Ed Giugliano
Brad Heavner
Frank Heintz
Debra Jacobson
Thomas Koch
Elizabeth Martin-Perera
Adrienne Ottaviani
Michael Replogle
Lise Van Susteren

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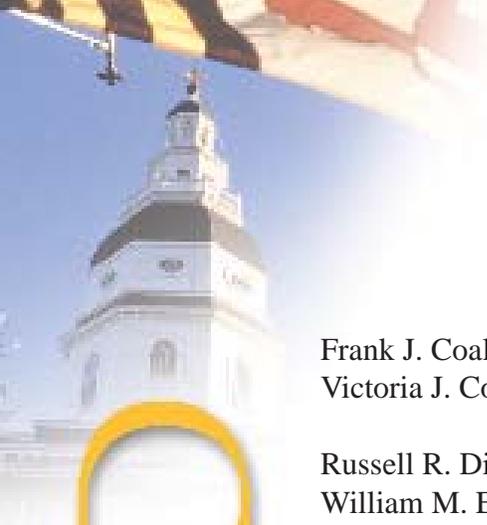
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William Chandler
Todd Chason
Brad Heavner
Michelle Harris Bondima
John Kumm
Julian Levy
William Livingston
Michael Mallinoff
Matthias Ruth
Scott Sklar

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Donald F. Boesch, Chair,	University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
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William C. Boicourt	University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science
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Donald R. Cahoon	U.S. Geological Survey

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Brian D. Fath
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Curtis E. Larsen, Lusby
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Margaret A. Palmer

Louis F. Pitelka

Steven D. Prince
Brian S. Schwartz
David H. Secor

Timothy Warman
Claire Welty

University of Maryland, College Park
University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science
University of Maryland, College Park
World Wildlife Fund
Towson University
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science
Maryland (U.S. Geological Survey, retired)
University of Maryland, Baltimore County
University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science
University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science
University of Maryland, College Park
The Johns Hopkins University
University of Maryland Center for
Environmental Science
National Wildlife Federation
University of Maryland, Baltimore County