

Request for Comments on Preliminary Draft to Renew the General Permit for Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs)

The Maryland Department of the Environment has developed a preliminary draft to renew the general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs).

Background: A draft proposal to renew the permit was published in December 2004, and hearings were held in January 2005. In the interim, the federal regulations, which served as the basis of that draft, were challenged in federal court and never finalized. In May of 2007, MDE and the Maryland Department of Agriculture publicly committed to update and implement the original proposal to address issues that are important to the Chesapeake Bay restoration. Since significant time has elapsed since the publication of the previous tentative determination and hearings, MDE is providing an informal comment opportunity prior to publishing a new tentative determination.

Proposal: Requirements for existing, permitted CAFOs have changed. MDE has added a requirement for a comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP) developed for the facility with an opportunity for public review and comment on that plan. This permit regulates poultry growers for the first time and includes requirements to properly store and handle dry manure.

Process: MDE has extended the preliminary comment period and intends to publish a revised tentative determination (draft permit) by **March 31, 2008**. EPA is also preparing final regulations for CAFOs and may issue these regulations at any time. While the tentative permit determination will include a formal opportunity to comment on the permit, MDE welcomes, in the interim, any written comments on the [preliminary draft](#) available on the MDE website. MDE also reserves the right to initiate its own changes to the draft proposal. MDE is specifically reviewing the fee structure to ensure that the Department will have adequate resources to properly implement these new requirements.

MDE will also propose regulations to formally implement the general permit for AFOs by March 31, 2008. These regulations will also outline the process for formal public review and comment for each request to register a facility under the general permit.

Written comments on the preliminary draft permit should be submitted by the close of business, **March 31, 2008** to Maryland Department of the Environment, Water Management Administration, 1800 Washington Blvd., Ste 455, Baltimore Maryland 21230, Attn: Edwal Stone, or via email to estone@mde.state.md.us.

The full text of the preliminary draft to renew the general permit for concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) may be viewed [here](#).

Frequently Asked Questions about Proposal to Regulate Animal Feeding Operations may be viewed [here](#).