



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Serena McIlwain, Secretary
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary

May 1, 2025

Mr. Mark Richmond, P.E.
Chief, Stormwater Management Division Department of Public Works
Howard County
9801 Broken Land Parkway
Columbia, MD 21046

Dear Mr. Richmond:

This letter acknowledges the Maryland Department of the Environment's (Department) receipt of Howard County's 2024 Financial Assurance Plan (FAP), and 2024 Watershed Protection and Restoration Program (WPRP) Annual Report as required by the Annotated Code of Maryland. This FAP submission includes information on the cost of compliance with the impervious surface restoration plan (ISRP) requirements outlined in the County's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase I Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit.

The ISRP, when sufficiently funded, is essential for restoring local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay, and providing climate resiliency in the County's watersheds. The FAPs are sufficient if they demonstrate that the County has the dedicated revenues, funds, or sources of funds to meet, for the 2-year period immediately following the filing date of the FAP, 100% of the projected costs of compliance with the ISRP requirements of the County's MS4 permit.

After reviewing the County's 2024 FAP, the Department has determined that the County has demonstrated that it has sufficient funding in its FAP. The Department has provided more detailed comments in an attachment for the County's information and use. The County's next WPRP Annual Report will be due in coordination with its next MS4 Annual Report, and its FAP will be due in coordination with the 2026 MS4 Annual Report.

The Department recognizes the substantial effort required in developing these FAPs and WPRP Annual Reports and looks forward to working with the County on this very important environmental program for improving water quality, stormwater management, and climate resiliency. If you have any questions regarding this review, please contact me at 410-537-3567 or Jennifer M. Smith at 410-537-3561, or jenniferm.smith@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

D. Lee Currey
Director, Water and Science Administration

cc: Jennifer M. Smith, P.E., Program Manager, Stormwater, Dam Safety, and Flood Management Program
Ms. Christine Lowe, P.E., Stormwater Management Division Department of Public Works

Attachment

Review of Howard County's 2024 Financial Assurance Plan (FAP)

Plan Condition	Assessment and Recommendations
Demonstration of Sufficient Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Howard County (County) submitted its FAP on December 20, 2024. A revised FAP was received on January 28, 2025. A public hearing was held on March 17, 2025, the County Council approved the FAP on April 7, 2025, and the County Executive approved the FAP on April 10, 2025. The FAP demonstrated sufficient funding for the projected Impervious Surface Restoration Plan (ISRP) costs for the next two-year period (i.e., FY2025-FY2026).
Actions to Meet Permit Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The plan included an Executive Summary. The "All Actions" worksheet included best management practices (BMPs) and associated costs for FY2025 to FY2029. For the next two years (FY2025-FY2026), the County plans to complete 197 acres of new restoration. Additionally, the County will maintain 475 acres of operational BMPs established in the previous permit.
Annual and Projected Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "All Actions - Planned" worksheet indicated that projected cost for new restoration to be implemented over the next two fiscal years (FY2025-FY2026) is \$51.2 million (M), and the projected cost for maintaining operational BMPs established during the previous permit is \$0.8M. In the "ISRP Costs" worksheet, costs were reported through FY2029, and the cost for the next two years is \$35.0M.
Annual and Projected Revenues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "ISRP Revenue" worksheet included projected revenues through FY2029. Reported revenue for FY2025 to FY2026 (\$35.8M) is slightly greater than the projected ISRP costs (\$35.0M).
Funding Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the "Fund Sources" worksheet, fund sources were projected through FY2029. Sources of funds for the next two years include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stormwater Remediation Fees = \$16.0M Watershed Bonds = \$15.1M Revenue (Utility) Bonds (Stormwater Bonds) = \$5.8M State Grants = - \$0.8M Operating – Street Sweeping = \$0.8M Operating – Inlet Cleaning = \$0.2M Operating – Howard County EcoWorks = \$0.9M Total Funding Sources = \$37.9M
Specific Actions and Expenditures from Previous Fiscal Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The "Specific Actions – Completed" worksheet included FY2020 through FY2024 BMPs and expenditures for 1,307 acres of new restoration and 509 acres of maintained and replacement BMPs for operational BMPs established in the previous permit.