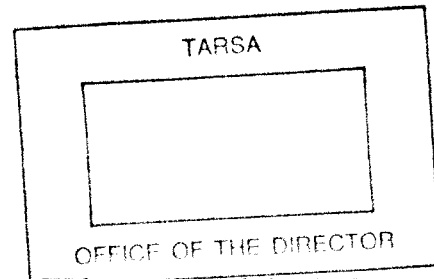




UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION III
1650 Arch Street
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103-2029

JAN 22 2003

Mr. Richard Eskin, Deputy Director
Technical & Regulatory Services Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Blvd., Suite 540
Baltimore, Maryland 21230-1718



Dear Mr. Eskin:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region III has reviewed the draft final report entitled, "Water Quality Analysis of Eutrophication for the Tidal Langford Creek, Kent County, Maryland," submitted by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) for final Agency review on December 16, 2002.

EPA concurs with MDE's determination that the recent data show that a nutrient total maximum daily load (TMDL) is not necessary for Tidal Langford Creek. Langford Creek was first listed by Maryland on its 1996 303(d) list of water quality-limited segments as impaired by nutrients, sediments, and fecal coliform with sources identified as nonpoint and natural. The sediment and fecal coliform impairments are to be addressed by MDE at a later date.

MDE's monitoring data show that DO concentrations are above Maryland's minimum water quality criterion of 5 mg/l. Additional volunteer water monitoring data ("Chester Testers") exist that reportedly show at least one low DO sample per year for most years since 1995; however, such infrequent events do not necessarily indicate an impairment. MDE's supporting data from 1999 for nutrients and chlorophyll-*a* (an indicator of algae growth) show total phosphorus concentrations ranging from 0.03 mg/l to 0.326 mg/l and total nitrogen ranging from 0.62 mg/l to 3.42 mg/l, and chlorophyll-*a* generally under 30 ug/l except for higher concentrations at St. Pauls Millpond, which is located on the non-tidal portion of Langford Creek, West Fork. MDE is considering a separate future action for St. Pauls Millpond and thus this waterbody is not included in this determination.



If, in the future, evidence suggests that nutrients from the Langford Creek watershed are contributing to water quality problems, then action will have to be taken. MDE should consider these data for the next 303d listing cycle.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (215) 814-5715 or Mr. Larry Merrill at (215) 814-5452.

Sincerely,



Joseph T. Piotrowski,
Associate Director
Water Protection Division
Office of Watersheds

cc: James George, MDE