

**BALTIMORE COUNTY ADVISORY
COMMISSION ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
(CEQ)**

**2008 ANNUAL REPORT TO
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND
BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL**

APRIL 2009

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BACKGROUND The Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) met regularly throughout the 2008 calendar year. Kathy Reiner Martin, Chair, set the agendas and presided at the meetings. This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2008 Annual Report to the Baltimore County Executive and Baltimore County Council* fulfills the requirement specified in County Bill No. 86-03 and provides a summary of CEQ activities during 2008.

CEQ MEMBERSHIP 2008 was a year to strengthen the CEQ by filling 2 long standing vacancies to represent Agriculture and Home Building and quickly replacing two retirees. We say farewell and best wishes to Charlie Conklin, 3rd District and Shirley Carl, 5th District who have served since the CEQ commissioning. We welcome new members Joan Norman, Mike Pierce and Jerry Jurick. They each bring unique skills to the CEQ table. As of December 2008, the CEQ membership included the following individuals.

District 1:

Joan Plisko, Ph.D., District 1 Representative, Environmental Systems Engineer,
Steve Schreiner, Ph.D., At Large Member: Science, Senior Scientist and Information Technology Manager

District 2:

Lois Jacobs, District 2 Representative, Landscape Architect/Designer
Nell B. Strachan, At Large Member: Attorney

District 3:

Mike Pierce, District 3 Representative, Telecommunication Industry
Linda Davis, At Large Member: Educator
Tom Moore, At Large Member: Home Builders
Joan Norman, At Large Member: Agriculture

District 4:

Willie Grier, District 4 Representative, Retired Educator
Rex Wright, At Large Member: Industry

District 5:

Jerry Jurick, District 5 Representative, Management-Environmental and Facilities
Kathy Reiner Martin, Chair, At Large Member: Community Activist
Brian Fath, Ph.D., At Large Member: Academia, Associate Professor -Biology

District 6:

Ray Davis, District 6 Representative, Retired Educator

District 7:

Russell Donnelly, District 7 Representative, Environmental Analyst

Note: The CEQ appreciates the ongoing work of Towson University graduate student Pat Brady, who worked on the County's Greenhouse Gas Inventory as part of her masters thesis, and informed the CEQ on her progress.

The CEQ also appreciates the work of Towson University intern, Tim Broderick, who researched and reported about sustainability programs in counties around the State and helped to review the County's Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan. Both provided valuable information.

The CEQ intends to continue to mentor local students through internships and graduate research projects.

CEQ MISSION STATEMENT

The CEQ activities in 2008 furthered the mission previously established for CEQ:

The purpose of the CEQ, through its duties and responsibilities as stated in the County Council Bill No. 86-03, is to encourage protection and preservation of the natural environment in Baltimore County and its waterways, including the Chesapeake Bay, by educating the community to make environmentally sustainable decisions and enlightening, advising, and initiating dialogue with County officials. We will facilitate communication between the County government and its residents on environmental needs, programs, and legislation.

2008 was a year that the prior work of the CEQ was recognized by its use in the implementation of new initiatives and introduction into action plans. As a group of dedicated volunteers for environmental integrity, we understand the need for following and monitoring environmental plans

CEQ ROLE IN ESTABLISHMENT OF DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

In Autumn 2007, the CEQ published the 'Cool Cities Recommendations to Baltimore County Council' in response to a direct request from County Councilman Moxley. Recommendations of that report included (1) Designate a Director of the County Sustainability Program and (2) Establish a Public-Private Sustainability Workgroup, which would work with the Director of the County Sustainability Program in implementing specific sustainability program components.

The CEQ worked with Baltimore County and other stakeholders to implement these recommendations. On April 22, 2008, Earth Day, Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith appointed David Carroll to the newly created position of Director of Sustainability. In this position, Mr. Carroll's primary objective is to improve the environmental sensitivity and sustainability of Baltimore County government operations. Current CEQ chair, Kathy Reiner Martin, and past chair, Rex Wright, attended the announcement of this new cabinet-level County position.

SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK

Following the announcement of the new Director of Sustainability, CEQ Members met with David Carroll to discuss plans, membership, and schedule for the newly created Baltimore County Sustainability Network.

The Sustainability Network consists of County and private sector representatives, as well as members from the environmental community. The Network is charged by County Executive Jim Smith to deliver recommendations for a sustainability strategy for Baltimore County operations within six months. The Network subdivided into four workgroups: Natural Resources, Operations, Built Environment, and Education.

Four CEQ members serve on committees of the Sustainability Network and two are co-chairs of their respective workgroups.

- Kathy Reiner Martin: Management of natural resources and work-plan planning group;
- Joan Plisko (co-chair): Operations of County facilities;
- Rex Wright (co-chair): Built Environment; and
- Brian Fath: Public Education and Outreach

The initial focus is on determining strategies to meet reduced greenhouse gas emissions for County operations by 10% by 2012 based on a study conducted by Pat Brady. Since the formation of the workgroups, CEQ members have been meeting regularly with the workgroups.

SUSTAINABILITY IN OTHER FORUMS

On December 2, 2008, the CEQ chair spoke at the Public Sustainability Forum hosted by the Sierra Club and the Baltimore County Office of Sustainability. CEQ members in attendance hosted citizens and answered questions at the CEQ table before the event.

CEQ members attended the announcement of the '10 % Greenhouse Gas Reduction Goal' where Baltimore County Executive Jim Smith 'released an inventory of the County's greenhouse gas emissions and announced a goal to cut the current rate by 10 percent in four years, as recommended by the Baltimore County Sustainability Network. ' Full announcement can be found at:

<http://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/News/releases/1121greenhousegas.html>

2008 CEQ REPORTS

Update on Conservation Landscaping

Work continued within the County agencies based on the CEQ's Conservation Landscaping plan as developed by the CEQ's Conservation Landscaping team in cooperation with Baltimore County's Departments of Environmental Protection and Resource Management, Recreation & Parks, Public Schools, Public Works, Permits & Development Mgmt and Community Conservation, and published in 2007. This body of work identifies landscaping methods for County-owned and private property consistent with thoughtful environmentally-desirable practices. The Conservation Landscaping Report can be found on the CEQ website.

Review and Feedback to County's Ten Year Solid Waste Plan

Members of the CEQ reviewed Baltimore County's 10-year Solid Waste Plan and developed a report outlining these key initiatives:

- Add toxicity to its mission statement and develop a comprehensive household hazardous waste management policy and programs.
- Increase recycling to include public buildings, multi-dwelling residential apartments, hospitals, and public universities.
- Assess different alternatives for recycling more plastics.
- Expand collection at Western Acceptance Facility (WAF) and other feasible sites for electronics reuse/recycling.
- Implement a single point resource recovery center in Baltimore County for construction debris.
- Publish actual amounts of waste ending up at BRESKO, Eastern Sanitary Landfill (ESL), Western Acceptance Facility (WAF), Baltimore County Resource Recovery Facility (BCRRF), and out of state.
- The CEQ recommends use of the current EPA hierarchy for managing the waste stream to reduce, recycle, and then dispose

The full CEQ report can be found on the CEQ website. Additionally, members of the CEQ attended the public meeting for Ten Year Solid Waste Plan to gain insight and provide additional comment.

2008 CEQ REPORTS, Cont'd.

Street Trees Removal Alternatives

In response to public concern in the Stoneleigh Community over removal of mature street trees, in August 2007, the CEQ was asked to look into County practices and procedures for the removal of roadside trees, and make recommendations on how to improve current procedures. The Committee met with the Department of Public Works/DPW and discussed compliance with regulations, documentation, and resident education. DPW welcomed further work with the Committee on alternatives to removal and ways to provide information to residents – including a web fact sheet, improved brochure, and a list of appropriate replacement street trees. The resulting report on these recommendations was sent to the County Executive, County Council, and Directors of DPW and DEPRM.

District 1 Tour and Report

CEQ members Joan Plisko and Kathy Martin conducted a District 1 tour with Jonas Jacobson, Director of DEPRM. Accompanying the group was Betsy McMillion, Stream Watch Director, Friends of Patapsco Valley & Heritage Greenway. The group visited the following sites and prepared and distributed a tour summary.

- Patapsco Valley State Park, Hilton Area
- Simpkins Paper Mill, River Road
- Patapsco State Park, Orange Grove Area
- Proposed Site of Lurman Arboretum
- Spring Grove Hospital Center
- Sawmill Branch, Dutton Ave behind Scittinos

The full report can be found on the CEQ website.

CONTACT WITH CITIZENS

CEQ members

- Participated in a forum to review Countywide sustainability efforts
- Participated in a public meeting to discuss sustainable practices, focusing on the Baltimore County sustainability plan.
- Reported to CCAN (Chesapeake Climate Action Network – representatives of local environmental organizations) about the recommendations contained in the Cool Cities report
- Fielded citizen questions about ground water contamination from road salt, tax credits for energy efficiency home retrofits, BGE replanting efforts along Cromwell Valley Road.
- Represented CEQ at the County watershed meeting at Goucher College
- Attended public hearing about deer population control plans in the Loch Raven Watershed property

CONTACT WITH COUNTY

2008 CEQ Chair Kathy Reiner Martin, met with:

- Representatives of DEPRM to discuss designation of a department representative for technical assistance as outlined in the CEQ formation bill.
- County Council chair, Kevin Kamenetz to review CEQ and its work. She also requested administrative and website support, as well as notification of Council bills with environmental impacts for CEQ recommendations.

CEQ members:

- Met with respective Council person to update them on CEQ activities and to discuss current environmental concerns and priorities in their district
- Joined the County Council for lunch to introduce members, discuss environmental priorities, and overview the work of the CEQ
- Attended County Council work sessions
- Met with Jonas Jacobsen (DEPRM) and Peter O'Malley (County Executive's chief of staff) to discuss the conservation landscaping report
- Met with Mary Harvey, Director, Office of Community Conservation to brief her on the Maryland Energy Administrations, RGGI fund program. Funds from this cap and trade sale will be administered in the Clean Energy Grant Program to provide funding to local governments and communities to facilitate projects that increase the energy efficiency and/or the use of renewable energy to benefit the local government or community and promote affordable, reliable, and clean energy.
- Attended introductory meeting of the County's Ten-Year Solid Waste Management Plan
- Attended meeting of Baltimore Watershed Agreement Committee of Principles to advocate for a strong action plan
- Requested briefing from Don Outen, DEPRM about the current salvage harvest of the forest on the Oregon Ridge Park, a Baltimore County park.
- Welcomed the ongoing, regular attendance of Don Outen of DEPRM. He has offered a meeting room to us as a regular meeting place. He can provide briefings and info on particular topics.
- Organized tours with Jonas Jacobsen, new director of DEPRM, through respective districts to highlight areas of environmental concern (1st district tour report attached) Future tours in each district are planned.
- Toured Marshy Point Nature Center, Baltimore County Park

COMMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATION

CEQ chair met with each member to discuss questions, concerns, and priorities in their district and area of environmental expertise.

CEQ members:

- Developed and distributed a CEQ members' handbook for current and new members which includes history, policies, and procedures.
- Updated the CEQ website.
- Established a chain of communication in response to outside requests for information: CEQ Chair, Committee Chair, Public Relations Person. If CEQ members give testimony to the Council, they will provide a printed copy to each Councilmember. CEQ will remain independent from other organizations.
- Prioritized topics for future CEQ consideration and formed committees to:
 - Review status of water-related agreements and plans such as the Watershed agreement, Builders for the Bay, new MD storm water regulations.
 - Review healthy living initiatives

TRACKING COUNTY AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

Members reviewed and discussed pending MD environmental legislation, including: energy related bills, legislation that addresses green buildings for state and school construction, tax credit for residential LEED buildings, other MD counties' actions on sustainability, and the MD carbon cap and trade auction.

Reviewed 2008 Baltimore County Legislation related to environmental issues

Resolution 66-08 Plastic bags

Proposed having the Office of the Auditor study ways to reduce plastic bag usage. Failed 2-5 at Sept 15 meeting.

Resolution 80-08 Design Standards for Rural Roads, passed Oct 20

Adopts Design Standards and Policies as amendment to county Design Manual.

Bill 101-08 Portable signs (visual environmental issue)

Purpose was to prohibit advertising signs on vehicles, specifically the moving displays. Died for lack of second.

Bill 102.08 Tax credit for high-performance homes (at least Silver rating under LEED) Withdrawn.

Bill 106-08 Changeable-copy signs (visual environmental issue)

Bill 108-08 Wireless Telecommunications Towers (visual environmental issue)

Proposes limits on towers within RC zones in an attempt to better hide them among forests.

Bill 110-08 Impervious areas in RC zones

Proposed to set limits on percentage of property that could be impervious. Withdrawn after opposition.

ONGOING EDUCATION OF CEQ MEMBERS

CEQ has invited speakers from within their ranks and county agencies to brief the CEQ on environmental issues and programs.

Agriculture in Baltimore County

CEQ Member Joan Norman presented a briefing on agriculture in Baltimore County. Her farm, One Straw Farm, is a certified organic vegetable farm, selling through distributors, to Whole Foods, through Community Supported Agriculture, and at farmer markets. The number of farms in Baltimore County has declined, and there is concern about having enough locally grown food to sustain the population in case of a national emergency. She emphasized also that “the closer you are to your food, the better it tastes,” and the healthier it is. A number of new initiatives to focus on locally grown food and to increase farming were discussed. She also described a program to eliminate plastic bags at the Kenilworth farmers market.

Update on County’s Green House Gas inventory

Towson University graduate student and CEQ intern, Pat Brady, updated members on the background research on the County’s Green House Gas Inventory that she performed as the basis for her master’s thesis. In 2008, Pat completed the data collection of county facilities (excluding schools and libraries). She presented her data and will fine tune the analysis. There are some gaps in data availability. County properties contribute about 1% of total county emissions; the target is to reduce emissions by county entities by 10% by 2012.

Stormwater presentation

Al Wirth, who has managed DEPRM stormwater engineering program for more than 20 years, gave a presentation to the CEQ SWM subcommittee. Al spoke on past, current, and the proposed changes to local stormwater programs based on the new SWM regulations.

ONGOING CEQ MEMBER CONCERNS

- Environmental impacts of deer overpopulation on County lands and parks
- Limiting development in waterfront critical areas
- Down zoning of land outside the URDL (Urban-Rural Demarcation Line)
- Financial implications of recycling i.e., return on investment and the recycling market.
- Education on the ‘triple bottom line’ concept. An addition of social and environmental values to the traditional economic measures of a corporation or organization's success. Triple Bottom Line accounting attempts to describe the social and environmental impact of an organization's activities, in a measurable way, to its economic performance in order to show improvement or to make evaluation more in-depth.