

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

**2010 ANNUAL REPORT TO  
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND  
BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**February 23, 2011**

**Table of Contents**

Background.....	1
CEQ Membership .....	1
CEQ Mission Statement.....	1
CEQ Role in Sustainability Network.....	2
CEQ Reports/Work Items .....	2
Deer Overpopulation.....	2
Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Road Salt.....	2
Plastic and Other Single-use Bags .....	2
Living Sustainably .....	2
Environmental District Tours.....	3
Contact with Citizens.....	3
Contact with County .....	3
Commission Infrastructure and Communication .....	3
Tracking County and State Environmental Issues and Legislation.....	3
Agricultural Zoning .....	3
Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan.....	4
Baltimore County legislation related to environmental issues.....	4
Ongoing Education of CEQ Members .....	4
Water/Electricity Use Association.....	4
Green House Gas .....	4
Recycling .....	4
Community Conservation.....	5
NeighborSpace.....	5
Deer and County Parks .....	5
Baltimore City Water Reservoirs.....	5
Ongoing CEQ Member Concerns .....	5

## **BACKGROUND**

The Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which was established by legislation in 2003, met eight times throughout the 2010 calendar year. Brian Fath, Chair, set the agendas and presided at the meetings.

This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2010 Annual Report to the Baltimore County Executive and Baltimore County Council* fulfills the requirement specified in Baltimore County Code Subsection 3-3-2106 and provides a summary of CEQ activities during 2010.

## **CEQ MEMBERSHIP**

The year ends with one vacancy for an At Large member. As of December 2010, the CEQ membership includes the following individuals.

### ***District 1:***

*Carri Beer*, District 1 Representative, Architect:

### ***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*, 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

## **CEQ MISSION STATEMENT**

The CEQ activities in 2010 furthered the mission previously established for the CEQ:

The purpose of the CEQ, through its duties and responsibilities as described in the Baltimore County Code, Subsection 3-3-21, 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 by enlightening, advising, and initiating dialogue with County officials. It facilitates communication between the County government and its residents on environmental needs, programs, and legislation.

As a group of dedicated volunteers for environmental integrity, the members understand the need for following and monitoring environmental plans.

## **CEQ ROLE IN SUSTAINABILITY NETWORK**

The Sustainability Network/SN consists of County and private sector representatives, as well as members from the environmental community. The creation of the Network was a result of the 2007 CEQ report to the County Council on the "Cool Cities" concept for addressing GHG. The Network was charged by then County Executive Jim Smith to deliver recommendations for a sustainability strategy for Baltimore County operations. The Sustainability Network and the Administration accepted that Baltimore County will utilize State's Greenhouse Gas reduction goals with a specific goal by 2012 to reduce emissions by 10 percent below 2006 levels. The Network subdivided into four workgroups: Natural Resources, Operations, Built Environment, and Education which finished their reports of sustainable actions for County government.

In 2010, many of the recommendations contained in the County government strategy were started and are well underway with a number in the planning stages. The focus for the SN was around creating a sustainability strategy for Baltimore County citizens by developing and hosting community phase focus group sessions. Work continues as we transition to a new executive, agency directors and council.

## **CEQ REPORTS/WORK ITEMS**

During 2010, the CEQ began work on one report and continued efforts to publicize previous reports as follows:

### **Deer Overpopulation**

Efforts have continued to make various public officials aware of this issue. The CEQ has begun drafting suggested modifications to the County Code that would allow hunting of deer in County Parks with the proper approval.

### **Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Road Salt**

Following release of this CEQ report in 2009, the CEQ has taken steps to publicize it and proposed a Resolution which was then passed by the County Council in April requesting the County Executive to initiate a study among County agencies to analyze the effects of salt versus other alternatives, prepare a cost-benefit analysis, establish stricter guidelines to regulate distribution of salt, and increase awareness of the environmental impacts through education.

### **Plastic and Other Single-use Bags**

A study was begun to examine the environmental impacts of plastic bags, and the relationship with other single- and multi-use bags. It is hoped that that result of this study will provide the base for potential county legislation to curtail the use of single-use bags and the resulting burden on solid waste and the environment.

### **Living Sustainably**

Members compiled a list of simple things that citizens can do on a daily basis to have a positive impact on the environment and are considering options for publicizing this list.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRICT TOURS**

No additional tours were held this year, but plans are being made to continue with additional Districts and to repeat those already done for the benefit of new Councilpersons or other county officials.

## **CONTACT WITH CITIZENS**

Various citizen enquiries came to the CEQ via its web site, including questions related to waste byproduct reuse and stream water quality, specifically trash and sediment input. The CEQ discussed these and the requestors were referred to the proper county agencies.

## **CONTACT WITH COUNTY**

During 2010, CEQ members:

- Met with respective Council persons to update them on CEQ activities and to discuss current environmental concerns and priorities in their district
- Attended County Council work sessions
- Welcomed the ongoing, regular attendance of Don Outen of DEPRM and John Alexander of the Office of Planning. They provide briefings and information on particular topics. There is a standing invitation to a DPW representative who attends when the topic is pertinent to their workload.

## **COMMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE AND COMMUNICATION**

The CEQ members discussed questions, concerns, and priorities in their districts and area of environmental expertise. CEQ members:

- Updated the CEQ website.
- Prioritized topics for future CEQ consideration
- Reviewed status of water-related agreements and plans such as the Watershed agreement, Builders for the Bay, new MD storm water regulations.
- Reviewed healthy living initiatives
- Attended various environmental lectures and events around the county.

In August, CEQ member Kathy Martin hosted the annual CEQ picnic at her property on Gunpowder River near the Bay where members could observe first-hand this lovely environmental resource.

## **TRACKING COUNTY AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION**

During its meetings, the CEQ members discussed various current issues for potential input:

### **Agricultural Zoning**

It was noted that Resolution 47-10 was passed by the County Council in June requesting the Planning Board (and thus the Office of Planning) to study changes to the RC-2 zoning, a Right-to-Farm bill, and initiatives to enhance agri-tourism. Many of the proposals being discussed would provide better watershed protection.

## Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan

The CEQ reviewed the provision of the proposed "Forest Conservation Act Enforcement" which would eliminate the fee in lieu of payment option and depend completely on forest mitigation banks to meet the "no net loss" requirement.

The CEQ sent a letter to the MDE TMDL coordinator expressing its concern that the new rules would have a significant negative impact on Baltimore County's successful reforestation program, which is dependant on the fee in lieu of program.

## Baltimore County legislation related to environmental issues

CEQ members discussed the environmental impacts of the following county legislation which was passed during 2010:

Resolution 15-10, Road Salt study

Bill 25-10, Stormwater Management Act, was passed to enact changes required by the state's Stormwater Management Act of 2007.

Bill 43-10, High Performance Homes, provided property tax relief for homes that reduce their energy demand beyond current use. The bill is performance based and relief percentages are equal to the percentage of energy reduced. The bill also allows for incentives to homes that meet the LEED for Homes Silver, Gold, or Platinum levels.

Bill 82-10, Tax Credit - Energy Conservation Devices, provides a tax credit for solar and geothermal systems.

Bill 83-10, Anemometers, allows erection of 100 ft towers with an anemometer for 1 year, to gather wind data for further analysis of the feasibility of small wind turbines in Baltimore County.

## **ONGOING EDUCATION OF CEQ MEMBERS**

CEQ has invited speakers from within their ranks, from county staff, and from outside to brief the CEQ on environmental issues and programs which may be useful in further work efforts.

### Water/Electricity Use Association

CEQ member Rex Wright gave a presentation describing the connection between water and electricity. The group learned that 40% of all electricity is used for water related activities such as production, pumping, sewage and 40% of water is used to produce electricity. Thus, savings in either can have a big effect on both.

### Green House Gas

Pat Brady gave an update on the GHG emissions inventory which the group had first heard about in 2008. The county's schools, libraries, and revenue authority buildings are now being added to the inventory.

### Recycling

Charlie Reighart, Director of Recycling and Waste Prevention, gave an overview of the success of the county's new single-stream recycling program. Early results show that recycling has increased from 696 tons/week to 920 tons, with a corresponding decrease in general trash.

## Community Conservation

Liz Glenn, Chief of Community Planning and Development of the Office of Community Conservation, gave an overview of the efforts of her office. While the office gives out loans for renovation of older homes for low-income families, there is now an increased emphasis on environmental conservation, for example, more expensive (upfront) appliances are required. In fact, dish washers are standard, due to the expected water savings.

## NeighborSpace

Barb Hopkins, Executive Director, provided an informative presentation on the efforts of NeighborSpace, which is a 501(c)(3) non-profit land trust promoting more livable communities in Baltimore County's established neighborhoods by acquiring land to serve as small parks, gardens and natural areas. The neighborhoods in which it works are within the Urban Rural Demarcation Line (URDL), an area that represents 30% of the County's total land area and that is home to 90% of the County's 816,000 residents. To date, NeighborSpace has protected 9 properties valued at over \$1 million and totaling 26 acres. NeighborSpace is funded through grants and individual contributions, with the majority of its acquisition funding coming via a County ordinance requiring developers to provide 1,000 SF of open space per dwelling unit or pay a fee in lieu thereof. NeighborSpace may receive up to ten percent of these fees at the County's discretion.

## Deer and County Parks

Courtney Peed, head naturalist at Oregon Ridge Park, described the condition of the park due to the over abundance of deer. Recent counts showed 5-7 times the number of deer which such an area should reasonably support. Besides the damage to the forest growth due to over-feeding, emaciated deer are often sighted.

## Baltimore City Water Reservoirs

CEQ member Jerry Jurrick gave an overview of the efforts being made to cover the remaining five uncovered treated water reservoirs. The one in Towson should be complete by 2013. Druid Lake and Ashburton will be left open due to their scenic importance, but water from these will be treated by UV purification.

## **ONGOING CEQ MEMBER CONCERNS**

During the course of CEQ discussions, individual members raised the following issues for possible later action by the commission:

- Limiting development in waterfront critical areas
- Application of more restrictive zoning of land outside the URDL (Urban-Rural Demarcation Line)
- Financial implications of recycling, i.e., return on investment and the recycling market.
- Revising building codes for better energy efficiency and "gray water" use.
- Educate and aid Baltimore County to create progressive codes and buildings that are more sustainable in terms of their energy use, water use, material selection, and public health.
- Redevelopment toward walkable communities.