



**2014 ANNUAL REPORT TO
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND
BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL**

January 22, 2016

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BACKGROUND

The Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ), which was established by legislation in 2003, met eight times throughout the 2014 calendar year. Brian Fath, Chair, set the agendas and presided at the meetings. Secretary, Andy Miller, took minutes at the meetings.

This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2014 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 2014.

CEQ MEMBERSHIP

The CEQ experienced quite a bit of turnover during 2014. On January 2014, the CEQ membership included the following individuals.

District 1:

Valerie Androutsopoulos, District 1 Representative

Steve Morsberger, At Large Member: Environmental Organization Representative

District 2:

Lois Jacobs, District 2 Representative

Andy Miller, Ph.D., At Large Member: Educator and Scientist of Environmental Policy/Management

Nell Strachan, At Large member

District 3:

Sharon Bailey, District 3 Representative

Bill Breakey, M.D., District 3 Representative

Linda Davis, At Large Member: Educator

Joan Norman, At Large Member: Agricultural Representative

Glenn Elseroad, At Large Member: Agricultural Representative

District 4:

Jeff Supik, District 4 Representative

Rex Wright, At Large Member: Business Community Representative

District 5:

Jim Burkman, District 5 Representative

Brian Fath, Ph.D., At Large Member: Academia

Eric Hadaway, At Large Member: Home Builders Representative

Kathy Reiner Martin, At Large Member

District 6:

Mary Gruver-Byers, District 6 Representative

District 7:

Russell Donnelly, District 7 Representative

County Government Liaisons:

Don Outen (EPS)

During the year, the terms of Sharon Bailey, Eric Hadaway, Kathy Martin, Joan Norman, and Nell Strachan expired and they chose not to be renewed. The CEQ thanks them for their dedicated service to the Commission. Kathy served as Chair from 2007 to 2010.

The CEQ welcomes new members Bill Breakey, Glenn Elseroad, and Steve Morsberger along with additional county staff Ayla Haig and Katie Coolahan both from the Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability.

CEQ MISSION STATEMENT

The CEQ activities in 2014 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 REPORTS/WORK ITEMS

During 2014, the CEQ continued efforts on two main projects—tree canopy cover and community sustainability with ongoing discussion on a number of other projects namely the environmental and public health impacts of road salt, water quality, forest health and regeneration, and open space.

Tree Canopy Cover

On December 30, 2013, the CEQ delivered to Council and Executive Offices a report titled: *Tree Canopy Cover in Baltimore County: Recommendations to the Baltimore County Council from the Baltimore County Commission on Environmental Quality*. The report is completed in response to the Baltimore County Resolution No. 72-13 and contains recommendations for the County to meet its newly established tree canopy goals. The CEQ continued to discuss these findings and prepared for a lunch presentation with Council which took place on April 1, 2014.

Sustainability

Baltimore County, under the direction of County Sustainability Manager, Ayla Haig, re-invigorated its past effort to draft a Community-wide sustainability plan. The plan focused on the eight key areas below:

- 1) Source Reduction, Recycling & Solid Waste
- 2) Buildings, Sites, Water & Energy
- 3) Community Form & Placemaking
- 4) Transportation & Mobility
- 5) Community Engagement & Capacity
- 6) Forestry & Natural Resource Systems
- 7) Food Production & Agriculture
- 8) Economic Vitality & Jobs

Commission members took the task to revisit the recommendations laid out in the original plan from 2010 with the intent to update and affirm best practices in these areas. The majority of our fall meetings were dedicated to this activity. Unfortunately, due Ayla Haig's reassignment within County Government and lack of County interest in this activity, a new, revised plan was not brought to fruition.

Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Road Salt

Particularly during the winter months, the issue of road salt alternatives was discussed.

Water Quality

The CEQ held discussions regarding the Baltimore County Stormwater Remediation Fee (impervious surface tax) in response to a State mandate to reduce sediment and nutrient loads entering the Chesapeake Bay.

Forest Health and Regeneration

The CEQ held discussions regarding the Baltimore County efforts to reduce deer population on County lands, particularly Oregon Ridge Park and Loch Raven Reservoir.

Open Space

The CEQ held discussions regarding Open space needs and opportunities in Baltimore County.

CONTACT WITH CITIZENS

Various citizen enquiries came to the CEQ via its website. The CEQ discussed these and the requestors were referred to the proper County agencies. Frequent issues focused on wildlife conservation (particularly, mowing schedules that impact migratory birds), community tree cover, trash, stream quality and erosion, detention pond maintenance, and open space.

CONTACT WITH COUNTY

During 2014, CEQ members:

- On April 1, CEQ were invited to Council lunch to present the findings of the Tree Canopy Cover Report.
- Met with respective Council members to update them on CEQ activities and to discuss current environmental concerns and priorities in their district.
- Welcomed the participation of Vince Gardina, Director of Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability at the March and September meetings.
- Welcomed the participation of Ms. Van Arsdale, Director of Department of Planning at the April meeting.
- Welcomed the participation of Ed Adams, Director of Department of Public Works at the May meeting.
- Welcomed the ongoing, regular attendance of Don Outen, Ayla Haig, and Katie Coolahan of EPS and John Alexander formerly of the Office of Planning.

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.
- Attended various environmental lectures and events around the County.

- In September, CEQ member Glenn Elseroad and his wife hosted the annual CEQ social dinner picnic at his house.
- During January 2014, CEQ Chair, Brian Fath completed the Open Meetings Act virtual training online. CEQ complies with the Act by renewing its written procedures; makes timely public announcement with time, date and location of the meeting; and, keeping minutes available for at least one year.

TRACKING COUNTY AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

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

Stormwater Remediation Fee

Plastic Bag Issues and Fees

Zoning

Baltimore County legislation related to environmental issues

ONGOING CEQ MEMBER CONCERNS

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

- Emerald Ash Borer
- Sea level rise in Baltimore County
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Nature protection and invasive species
- County property mowing schedules
- Bio-energy production
- Revising building codes for better energy efficiency and "gray water" use
- Redevelopment toward walkable communities