



**2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND
BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL**

February 6, 2012

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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 2011 calendar year. Brian Fath, Chair, set the agendas and presided at the meetings.

This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2011 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 2011.

CEQ MEMBERSHIP

The year ends with one vacancy for a representative from District 1. As of December 2011, the CEQ membership includes the following individuals.

District 1:

Vacant

District 2:

Lois Jacobs, District 2 Representative

Andy Miller, Ph.D. At Large Member: Environmental Conservation

Nell B. Strachan, At Large Member: Attorney

District 3:

Sharon Bailey, District 3 Representative

Linda Davis, At Large Member: Educator

Joan Norman, At Large Member: Agriculture

District 4:

Jeff Supik, District 4 Representative

Rex Wright, At Large Member: Industry

District 5:

Jerry Jurick, District 5 Representative

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

Eric Hadaway, At Large Member: Home Builders

Kathy Reiner Martin, At Large Member: Community Activist

District 6:

Mary Gruver-Byers, District 6 Representative

District 7:

Russell Donnelly, District 7 Representative

CEQ MISSION STATEMENT

The CEQ activities in 2011 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 2011, the CEQ began work on two reports and continued efforts to publicize previous reports as follows:

Deer Overpopulation

The CEQ played an important role in the bringing this issue to the attention of public officials. County Code was amended in order to allow hunting of deer in County Parks with the proper approval.

Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Road Salt

Following release of this report in 2009, the CEQ has taken steps to publicize it and sponsored a Resolution 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.

Plastic and Other Single-use Bags

A study was completed to examine various aspects of the plastic bag issue, and its relationship with other single- and multi-use bags. The report was delivered to County Council and Director of Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability in November 2011. 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.

Green Schools and Waste Stream Reduction

A study was begun to assess the amount of waste generated in school cafeterias. We began with an overview of the green school program and are currently gathering more information on this topic to make recommendations some time in 2012.

Water Quality

A project was begun to become more familiar with the Baltimore County WIP, TMDL, and NPDES processes. CEQ has considerable expertise in the area of water quality and wants to offer sound advice on moving forward in these areas.

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 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 2011, 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 EPS and John Alexander of the Office of Planning. They can provide briefings and information on particular topics. There is a standing invite 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
- Attended various environmental lectures and events around the county.
- In September, CEQ member Nell Strachan hosted the annual CEQ picnic at her house.
- Upon request, Bryan Dunn from Baltimore County produced a logo for CEQ which can be used for letterhead and reports. The logo is featured on the cover of the report and below:



TRACKING COUNTY AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

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

Gray Water

Baltimore County legislation related to environmental issues

ONGOING EDUCATION OF CEQ MEMBERS

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

Biodiversity

Janet Schollenberger from Sierra Club gave a presentation on biodiversity.

What is going on in Baltimore County?

Charlie Conklin gave an overview of various conservation groups in Baltimore County. These were organized on a matrix based on activity types. The list included most existing groups in BC. There is a lot of good work being done in Baltimore County. However, consolidation of some groups could help save money and reduce redundancy. CEQ could serve as a clearinghouse for information on its website.

Total Maximum Daily Loads, NPDES, WIP (May, November)

Steve Stewart from Baltimore County Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability twice presented to our group to update us on the important issues of water quality standards and initiatives. There have been TMDLs approved by EPA for Nutrient, Sediment and Bacteria in various BC water bodies. The Water Implementation Plan is how Baltimore plans to meet its obligation to water quality standards. Baltimore County WIP Phase II implementation team is comprised of 30-40 people. The WIP includes two year milestones to measure if progress is being made. Specific restoration actions will depend on what is in the Capital Projects budget. Bay restoration Funds to double, with money to upgrade wastewater treatment plants, money to local governments to implement WIP. Currently, the Back River and Patapsco wastewater treatment plants working below discharge capacity borrowing from future for reduction credit

Baltimore County Green School Program

Jeanne Armacost, Natural Resource Specialist at Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability spoke to CEQ about the Maryland Green Schools program. The program started out originally as the Governor's Green School program. The Maryland program focuses on environmental education which is investigative, data collecting, looking at issues, evaluating both sides, weighing evidence; providing context for understanding with a trans-disciplinary perspective. It is inquiry-based, not advocacy. It has become a model for how to make learning relevant to local issues, watersheds, and with an outdoor focus.

Sustainability initiatives at Towson University

Jack Nye, Director of Sustainability at Towson University gave an overview of what Towson University has been doing with respect to environmental sustainability. President Caret signed the ACUPCC Climate commitment in 2007 to become carbon neutral by 2050. The 2016 strategic plan established campus sustainability as a primary goal, and elements include health, safety, environmental sustainability, and energy conservation. An office of sustainability was created to coordinate the 2016 strategic plan the 2009 campus master plan 2009, the climate action plan (CAP), and the campus sustainability plan. New construction must be at least LEED-silver, reducing energy use, CO₂ emissions, water use and solid waste. TU's goal is to increase on campus housing capacity by 60% and expand shuttle service on and off campus hopefully to reduce automobile usage and congestion. TU already promotes Zipcar, shuttles, MTA transit subsidy, as well as incentives to carpool drive hybrids and to encourage pedestrian and bike travel. Towson is looking to lead by example, serve as model for the community. Towson University was named to Princeton Review's Guide to 311 Green Colleges in 2010 and 2011.

ONGOING CEQ MEMBER CONCERNS

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

- Application of more restrictive zoning of land outside the URDL (Urban-Rural Demarcation Line)
- Recycling and waste reduction
- Bio-energy production
- Revising building codes for better energy efficiency and "gray water" use
- Redevelopment toward walkable communities