



**2012 ANNUAL REPORT TO
BALTIMORE COUNTY EXECUTIVE AND
BALTIMORE COUNTY COUNCIL**

February 27, 2013

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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 2012 calendar year. Brian Fath, Chair, set the agendas and presided at the January, September, October and November meeting and co-Chairs, Sharon Bailey and Nell Strachan executed those responsibilities at the February, March, April and May meetings. Secretary, Andy Miller, took minutes at the meetings.

This *Baltimore County Advisory Commission on Environmental Quality (CEQ) 2012 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 2012.

CEQ MEMBERSHIP

The CEQ enjoyed full and active membership during 2012. As of January 2013, the CEQ membership includes the following individuals.

District 1:

Valerie Androutsopoulos, District 1 Representative

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 2012 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 2012, the CEQ continued efforts on three main projects—environmental and public health impacts of road salt, water quality (WIP, TMDL, and NPDES processes), and deer overpopulation in Baltimore County. The CEQ also contributed heavily to the zoning issues that emerged in 2012.

Environmental and Public Health Impacts of Road Salt

Following release of a report in 2009, the CEQ worked hard to establish a pilot program that would allow neighborhoods to volunteer for plow only service during snow events. This action would reduce total salt applications and provide education to the participating communities. An informational brochure was prepared for this pilot by the CEQ. The project was not pursued on advice of the County.

Water Quality

The CEQ maintained an active engagement in the issues of water quality in the county and considered factors to promote volunteer monitoring of streams.

Deer Overpopulation

The CEQ sustained the issue to the attention of public officials. USDA managed hunts were scheduled in order to cull the deer herd populations in Baltimore County.

Comprehensive Zoning and Mapping Process

In 2012, several requests for upzoning were made mostly above the URDL, totaling over 1000 acres. The CEQ reviewed and commented on these issues in context of the existing Master Plan and the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement. The CEQ also promoted the legacy of 40 years of strong leadership in the area of land use and planning which has resulted in a high quality of living in Baltimore County.

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. The CEQ discussed these and the requestors were referred to the proper county agencies.

CONTACT WITH COUNTY

During 2012, 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 participation of Vince Gardina, Director of DEPS at the January and September meetings
- Welcomed the ongoing, regular attendance of Don Outen and Ayla Haig of DEPS and John Alexander of the Office of Planning.
- CEQ had a briefing from Charles Reighart from Department of Public Works on the Bear Creek recycling Facility.

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 August, CEQ member Sharon Bailey hosted the annual CEQ picnic at her house.

TRACKING COUNTY AND STATE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES AND LEGISLATION

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

Wind Energy

Zoning

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.

Baltimore County Sustainability

Ayla Haig, Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability updated the county's commitment to improve awareness and sustainable practices in government, work with private sector, citizens, state, local and federal agencies. Specifically, this includes: community wide sustainability efforts, Sustainability network, Greenhouse gas inventory, Community wide sustainability plan, Energy efficiency and conservation block grants, Green vehicles, and Green@Work energy challenge.

Sustainable Forest Management in Baltimore County

Don Outen, Department of Environmental Protection and Sustainability, presented a comprehensive overview of sustainable forest management in Baltimore County. This included an overview of the role forests play for ecological services such as clean water, habitat, carbon sequestration, and nutrient recycling. However, forests losses continue at a rate of 100 Acre/day due to pests (emerald ash borer) and development.

Baltimore County's role in Watershed Stewardship

Bill Stack, Deputy Director of Programs for the Center for Watershed Protection, spoke about the history of the multi-jurisdictional Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement. In 1979, the County Executive and the Mayor signed an agreement to protect the reservoirs. In 1984, they signed the Reservoir Watershed Management Agreement with three goals: prevent increased phosphorus and sediment to all three reservoirs; restore phosphorus in Loch Raven to pre-1970's levels, and reduce phosphorus in other reservoirs as quickly as possible. This included a Government Stewardship clause: Conservation and agricultural zoning of the reservoir watershed areas should be maintained at present extent and not reduced; and Baltimore and Carroll counties will protect the reservoir watersheds by limiting insofar as possible additional urban development zoning within the reservoir watersheds. There was a dramatic decline in effluent P loads from wastewater treatment plants from early 1980's to early 1990's. In 1990, there was a reaffirmation of the Reservoir Management Agreement, including downzoning of 30-40K acres of RC4 land to Agricultural zoning.

Sparrows Point Property

Fran Flanigan and David Carroll from Ecologix and Melissa Slatnick from Maryland Environmental Service reported on the proposed project at Coke Point, part of the Sparrows Point property. This project is being proposed by the MD Port Administration to provide a site for needed capacity to place dredged material from Baltimore Harbor.

Volunteer Stream monitoring

Dan Boward from Maryland DNR gave a presentation about the volunteer Stream Waders Program and the Maryland Biological Stream Survey (MBSS). Started in 1993, it is one of the earliest programs to use biological monitoring of streams in the country. Stream quality is assessed from the data using an Index of Biotic Integrity (IBI), from poor, fair, and good. There is a pattern of poor sites in urban, agriculture and mining areas. To date, there are around 1200 trainees; 40 teams/yr; who have sampled 5950 sites.

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