



PressRelease

410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, Maryland 21403
voice 410-267-5700 • fax 410-267-5777 • toll free 800-YOUR-BAY

For more information, contact Christopher Conner, 410-267-5758

Bay Leaders Adopt Three Agreements Curbing Development's Impact on Chesapeake Bay

Washington, DC (December 3, 2001) – Three new cooperative agreements that will minimize the impact of development on urban waterways were adopted at today's annual meeting of the Chesapeake Executive Council by representatives from environmental groups, trade associations, and local, state and federal governments. The regional pacts aim to improve water quality in the Bay and its tributaries by encouraging regional planning, storm water management and low-impact development in many parts of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The Chesapeake Executive Council – comprised of District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams; Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening; Pennsylvania Governor Mark Schweiker; Virginia Governor James S. Gilmore, III; U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman; and Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair Brian E. Frosh – unveiled a new Chesapeake Bay Program initiative committed to developing new technologies to reduce storm water pollution and enhance existing storm water management practices on government owned lands.

In hopes of further reducing the environmental impacts from residential and commercial development, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, the Center for Watershed Protection and the National Association of Home Builders today signed an agreement launching *Builders for the Bay*. This new partnership encourages the voluntary adoption of site design principles that benefit local waters and the Chesapeake Bay. Over the next two years, the program plans to seek the voluntary adoption of these principles in twelve counties or municipalities in the Bay watershed.

Officials from the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland and Montgomery and Prince George's counties today also signed a regional pact stepping-up efforts to restore the Anacostia watershed. The *2001 Anacostia Watershed Restoration Agreement* builds upon earlier regional agreements and sets new, comprehensive goals for restoring water quality and living resources in the Anacostia basin. The agreement commits to 50 restoration targets, including creating additional riparian forest buffers, decreasing impervious surface area through low impact development, and establishing active river advocacy groups in each major Anacostia subwatershed.

The Bay Program's storm water directive is one of the first major restoration milestones called for in last year's historic *Chesapeake 2000* agreement. Given projected increases in urban and suburban growth, managing storm water is one of the most important priorities Bay Program partners will undertake to improve water quality and sustain progress in restoring the Bay's living resources. The directive focusing on government lands is a significant first step in that process.

Urban storm water runoff is responsible for about 15 percent of nutrients (both nitrogen and phosphorus) and 9 percent of sediments entering the Bay and its tributaries, and is responsible for impairments on over 1,570 miles of streams within the watershed.

Enhanced storm water management improves the health of urban waterways by reducing pollutant loads locally, and also leads to improved water quality downstream by increasing water clarity and reducing excessive algae growth. Urban storm water loads of toxic chemicals are substantial – and today's storm water directive commits to reducing these loads by 30% by 2008 in areas such as Baltimore Harbor and the Anacostia and Elizabeth Rivers.

Increased population and development within the Chesapeake Bay watershed have created challenges for Bay Program partners in controlling the amount of nutrients reaching the Bay's waters. While past efforts have primarily addressed agricultural runoff, pollutant loads from storm water are increasing. The three agreements signed today will work to lessen the impacts of development and storm water flow.

For more information about the new Chesapeake Bay storm water directive, including background information on storm water and the Bay, visit the Chesapeake Bay Program online Press Center at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/press.htm>.

-30-

For more information, contact:

Christopher Conner, Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Director, 410-267-5758

Visit the Chesapeake Bay Program website:
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net>

Statements from Chesapeake Executive Council Members

District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams, Executive Council Chair:

"It has been a pleasure to serve as Chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council at a time when this region is truly setting a national standard for ecosystem restoration. The challenges are significant, but the Chesapeake Bay Program is innovative and comprehensive. I am especially proud that this year the Bay Program established an Environmental Justice Task Force, integrating environmental revitalization with neighborhood revitalization and demonstrating real commitment to sustainable development – that which protects our environment, strengthens our economy and ensures social justice."

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman:

"We can't stop development from happening, but we can minimize its impact on the Bay. The Storm Water Directive signed today is a great example of government taking the lead and being responsible stewards of our lands," said EPA Administrator Christie Whitman. "The new *Builders for the Bay* initiative is a partnership that exemplifies the private sector stepping up to the plate as valued partners in these efforts. The actions taken today, including the signing of the new *Anacostia Agreement*, will help protect the Chesapeake Bay for our children and their children to enjoy for years to come."

Virginia Governor James S. Gilmore, III:

"Today's actions show that government has a major role in this restoration, but we can't do it alone," said Governor Gilmore. "Local communities, businesses, developers and average citizens all have a role in lessening their impact on our waters throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It is only through sharing this commitment that we will restore this national treasure."

Pennsylvania Governor Mark Schweiker:

"Thanks to our \$650-million 'Growing Greener' program – Pennsylvania's largest-ever environmental investment – and our 'Growing Smarter' land-use reforms, Pennsylvania is reaching new milestones in preserving farmland, protecting open space, improving watersheds and managing growth," Governor Schweiker said. "And in partnership with our downstream neighbors, Pennsylvania will continue to work aggressively to fulfill its commitment to the Chesapeake Bay."

– more –

Visit the Chesapeake Bay Program website:
<http://www.chesapeakebay.net>

Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair Brian E. Frosh:

"The only solution to restoring the Bay is to do what we are already doing better and to find new strategies that further reduce pollution and limit sprawl. We'll need money. Given the fiscal situations, the pressure is on all of us to think creatively and lead aggressively."

Maryland Governor Parris N. Glendening:

"While we are faced with many difficult challenges, it is time for us to take the next aggressive steps in restoring the health of the Chesapeake Bay. The recent national economic downturn has put a strain on funding, but our commitment to cleaning up the bay is as strong as ever. We have made significant progress, but land continues to be consumed at alarming rates and the future of some of our living resources hang in the balance. We must move forward with a sense of urgency to achieve the ambitious goals outlined in the Chesapeake Bay 2000 agreement."

"Once a forest is cut down or a farm is paved over, it is lost forever to development. The same is true for the treasures of our Chesapeake Bay. Once our land and resources are gone, we can never get them back. We must act now to preserve and protect what is unique about Maryland – our living and natural resources."

"The Bay Program is a world leader in environmental restoration. New ideas, innovative thinking, and public commitment got us there. Now we need to be innovative about the way we face both the scientific challenge and the financial challenge. It is why Maryland strongly supports the new Farm Bill, especially the innovative provisions that help reduce farmland loss and fragmentation and gives farmers the tools they need to reduce nutrient pollution of streams, rivers and the Bay. It is further proof of our unreserved commitment to a clean and healthy Bay."