MARYLAND
1999 BAY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

The annual Executive Council meeting is an excellent time to review and highlight the accomplishments of the state of Maryland as it works, under the leadership of Governor Parris N. Glendening, to meet the goals and commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership. As a partner in the Chesapeake Bay Program since the signing of the historic *1983 Chesapeake Bay Agreement*, Maryland has worked hard in many areas including nutrient and toxic reduction, habitat restoration, growth management, education, land preservation and public outreach and participation. The hard work of the citizens of Maryland is paying off. The Bay and its tributaries are generally cleaner and healthier than they were just 16 years ago when the first Bay agreement was signed. Today, we would like to take a few minutes to give you an overview of how we have been working to insure a cleaner, healthier more resilient Chesapeake Bay system.

OVERVIEW

In most areas our Bay restoration effort evidenced continued progress. However, 1999 was a year that put additional stress on the Chesapeake Bay in Maryland. A severe drought, the worst in decades, afflicted the region. While this brought some short-term benefits to the Bay, especially in terms of less nutrient and sediment pollution due to reduced runoff, there were also negative consequences: Less fresh water flowing into the Bay raised salinities in tidal tributaries, which stressed living resources who call these water bodies home; low oxygen conditions related to the drought caused several fish kills in tidal creeks; trees, grasses and other vegetation were adversely affected by the lack of rainfall; and the drought inflicted considerable economic hardship on Maryland's farmers (more than $70 million in damages).

In areas of resource protection, outreach, education and citizen participation, Maryland continued to set a strong pace. The second year of the state's Rural Legacy Program put additional acres of the most ecologically valuable land under increased protection; the more than 350 members of the Tributary Teams continued to demonstrate their value in developing new ideas and implementing current plans; and more than 210 miles of riparian forest buffer have been established, putting the state well ahead of its timetable to achieve 600 miles of new buffer by 2010. Another important milestone in 1999 included national recognition for Maryland's unique Bay Game.

MARYLAND PROGRAM SPECIFICS

- ***Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation*** – Maryland continued implementing its first-in-the-nation "Smart Growth" program to control sprawl and change the patterns of development which have destroyed habitat, degraded water quality, and adversely affected

the state's communities through the use of:

Rural Legacy -- Maryland redirects existing State funds into a focused and dedicated land preservation program specifically designed to limit the adverse impacts of sprawl on our agricultural lands and natural resources. The program creates "Greenbelts" - green spaces that generally define where a community or developed area ends and where the countryside begins. The program reallocates State funds to purchase conservation easements for large contiguous tracts of agricultural, forest and natural areas subject to development pressure, and fee interests in open space where public access and use is needed. Over the next five years, the program will commit approximately $163 million to preserve nearly 90,000 acres of farms, forests and open spaces.

Priority Funding Areas -- State investment in local jurisdictions is focused to "smart growth"areas. State funds for roads and highways, business development financing and economic development, water and sewer improvements, and most housing programs are targeted to areas that meet select density and growth criteria. The Priority Funding Area program discourages new development in open spaces and aims to prevent problems associated with sprawl such as water pollution from stormwater and construction runoff, additional air pollution from increased commuting miles, and loss of wildlife habitat. Priority Funding Areas include all municipalities, all areas inside the Baltimore and Washington beltways, and designated revitalization areas, enterprise zones and empowerment zones.

"Brownfields" Redevelopment -- This program spurs redevelopment of properties that are contaminated, or even perceived to be contaminated, while ensuring that the environment and public health will continue to be protected. Since the program began, the Maryland Department of the Environment has received 49 applications for the voluntary cleanup program, covering more than 1,100 acres.

~ ***Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR) Program*** – One of Maryland's tactics for implementing the Chesapeake Bay Agreement's nutrient reduction strategy for point source discharges is though cost-share funding of biological nutrient removal of nitrogen and chemical phosphorus removal at all wastewater treatment plants that have a design flow equal to or greater than 500,000 gallons per day. Of Maryland's 65 treatment plants, 61 have either installed or have signed cost-share agreements for implementation of BNR. This represents a 94 percent voluntary participation rate. This year, $ 12.2 million has been authorized to fund 19 projects, bringing total spending for BNR to $418 million.

~ ***Watershed Pollution Limits*** -- Maryland continues work to establish pollution limits for Priority State watersheds, a commitment matched by few states in the country. These limits, called Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs), effectively build upon the 40 percent nutrient reduction commitments made in 1987 by establishing numeric commitments for other pollutants. During the past three years, Maryland assessed the status of water quality throughout the state, and identified those waters that are currently not meeting designated uses. The state will establish a TMDL for the substances causing the impairment of the waterways and the source of the substance (both point and nonpoint). Priority water bodies include the Chesapeake Bay

Tributary Strategy watersheds, the Maryland Coastal Bays watershed, the Baltimore Harbor watershed, and water bodies impaired by toxic chemicals.

- ***Tributary Teams*** -- Maryland's innovative Tributary Teams continued to play an increasingly important role in environmental management, more thoroughly involving people and local governments in cleanup activities, testifying before special commissions, and helping achieve the 40 percent nutrient reductions we have been working towards since 1987. Their third annual meeting brought together team members from across the state to meet with the Governor and other state officials to help chart the course for the coming year. In June, in cooperation with the Sunpapers, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, US EPA, and USDA a special booklet, ***"Fragile, Handle with Care,"*** was inserted into the Baltimore Sun. This booklet provided Marylanders with a comprehensive guide to both cleaning up the Bay and protecting the land and water in each citizen's own back yard. In September, a Tributary Team led Task Force completed recommendations to address problems from septic systems and promote the use of advanced technologies.

- ***Maryland Bay and Mountain Games*** – Created for children 3 years and up, Maryland's Bay and Mountain Games help parents avoid the eternal question, "Are we there yet?" The Maryland Bay and Mountain Games are an interactive educational activity designed for children, played during car/bus trips between the Chesapeake Bay Bridge and the Ocean City coast, and to Western Maryland. The games were designed to help young people identify Bay-related objects, features and items (e.g., osprey nests, wetlands, farm fields, watermen's boats) as they travel to Ocean City. The Maryland Bay Game was designated as one of the Top 100 Innovations in American Government by Harvard University and won the Water Environment Federation's prestigious Public Education Award.

- ***Bay Grasses in Classes*** – This educational program teaches students in 70 Maryland schools about Bay grasses and their importance as habitat. Through a partnership between the Department of Natural Resources, the Chesapeake Bay Trust, and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, students study Bay grasses, obtain various Bay grass seeds, grow them in the classroom and then assist DNR biologists in planting them.

- ***Chesapeake Lands*** – In order to protect Maryland's natural resources, Maryland acquired all of the land formerly owned by Chesapeake Forest Products, over 58,000 acres on the state's Eastern Shore. In partnership with The Conservation Fund and the Richard King Mellon Foundation, the state will pay $16.5 million for the property, which is the largest land acquisition in State history. The settlement will enable Maryland to protect some of the State's most environmentally sensitive land, including thousands of acres of wetlands and wildlife habitats.

- ***Chesapeake Bay Bridge Repainting*** – As part of the continual upgrading of the 4.5 mile Bay Bridge, Maryland launched a $70 million project to repaint the structure. Even though this is almost double the original $45 million construction cost, the money is well spent. Special procedures have been put in place to prevent lead paint chips, dust and spray from polluting the waters of the Bay. These materials are being collected and disposed of in a safe and

environmental manner, instead of being dropped into the Bay.

- ***Chesapeake Bay Education Initiative*** – As part of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay Education Initiative, two school teachers traveled to Turkey as active participants in the fourth international conference on Environmental Management of Enclosed Coastal Seas. Ann Williams (Northern Middle School, Calvert County) presented a paper, and
  Patricia Chambers (Stephen Decatur Middle School, Worcester County) contributed a poster. Both showed how they were using authentic coastal research projects developed during summer internships with the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science to enrich their school curricula. They made many networking contacts among the very interested delegates from 50 countries, and Ms. Chambers received first prize for best poster at the conference.

- ***Green School Awards*** – A new initiative in Maryland recognizing schools for achievement in environmental stewardship. Honored schools were chosen for projects that included: natural restoration on school grounds, wetland restoration in the community, outdoor trail development or responsible school transportation initiatives. No special curriculum was needed to meet the criteria and the program was designed to support Maryland's education goals. All public and non-public schools were eligible. Thirty four schools were selected as Governor's Green Schools from more than 60 applications.

- ***Invasive Species Controlled*** – To help protect public safety and preserve native living resources in Chesapeake Bay tributaries, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources led an intensive effort to remove dense populations of water chestnut from parts of the Sassafras River and Bird Creek. (Water chestnut, native to Asia, is an aquatic plant that endangers water resources and the safety of those who enjoy recreating in and around the water.) In consultation with national experts, other state agencies, interest groups, federal agencies, counties, and Maryland's Tributary Teams, the state attacked the potentially dangerous plant with mechanical removal and a massive volunteer effort to manually remove plants.

- ***Worked with Farmers*** – Maryland Department of Agriculture provided $4.6 million to assist farmers in installing over 900 projects to improve water quality. This funding will prevent an additional 35,000 tons of soil from reaching Maryland waterways annually and manage an additional 1,700 tons of animal waste daily. In addition, Maryland supported local soil conservation districts, providing additional technical staff to install more than 7,000 best management practices on farms and develop over 1,200 Soil Conservation and Water Quality plans encompassing 99,000 acres. The state also established the Poultry Litter Transportation Pilot Project to assist farmers in redistributing excess poultry litter. These were funded with matching funds from poultry companies, and provides up to $20 per ton to move poultry litter to areas that need additional fertilizers. Finally, MDA developed the Nutrient Management Plan Cost Share Program to provide 50% of the cost of developing certain nutrient management plans, up to $3 per acre.

As we head into the new millennium, Maryland's place in the natural world is a vital one. The state embraces the largest and most productive estuary in North America, the Chesapeake Bay, and much work and effort has been dedicated to its restoration. Every Marylander should continue to give unyielding support to the cleanliness of our state's waters, the vitality of its living resources, the purity

of Maryland's air and the protection for future generations of a quality of life unmatched anywhere in the United States.