



FREDERICK COUNTY SUSTAINABILITY COMMISSION

FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Comments on Draft Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay

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The Frederick County (Maryland) Sustainability Commission writes to express our gratitude to being able to respond to this initiative of the EPA in joining with other federal agencies efforts to assist the residents, businesses and farmers of Maryland in restoring and protecting the Chesapeake Bay. The Commission's challenge is to enhance the social, economic, and environmental fabric of our community and keep the determined focus that they are one. We have expressed priorities in preserving our agricultural base economy.

The Draft Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay is comprehensive with targeted outcomes. It focuses on priorities and compliance, and its success relies heavily upon productive collaboration among federal and state agencies, local jurisdictions, private organizations, businesses, farmers and individual citizens. A clear understanding of the impact of the enforcement of new and existing regulations, program support for stakeholder compliance particularly farmers, and possible adoption of new concrete federal, state and county conservation regulations is essential.

The Sustainability Commission concurs with the requests made in Mr. John Griffith's 9/30/09 letter (Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources) asking that the Executive Order "be applied in targeting federal resources to support successful implementation of state milestones and achievement of shared long term restoration goals." We look forward to the EPA and the Federal Leadership Committee input to establish a viable formal process of working closely with the State, the County and our broad community interest to provide technical assistance, guidance and funding for a coordinated strategy. As outlined in the draft document, the leadership is diffuse, appearing to hold no one accountable for this critical endeavor. We encourage you to be more specific in these details particularly for implementation, enforcement, and working with our various community member concerns to facilitate the process and ensure that there is accountability.

Our Commission is poised to recommend participation in the initiatives as laid out in Part 3 of the draft strategy. Among these is supporting the development of a Green Infrastructure Plan for Frederick County that will protect and restore the biological integrity of our natural environment, enhance and protect farming and the quality and quantity of our ground and surface waters. This is the appropriate time, as the county is currently completing its comprehensive planning and zoning for the next 20 years; the plan focuses on redevelopment, infill growth and curbing edge development. Hand in hand are initiatives to promote community connectivity through a safe walkable/ bikeable infrastructure, greater access to public transportation (addressing the issue of nitrogen deposition into water from air) and improved storm water management.

The Sustainability Commission will be contacting the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office this month to request a program presentation for our local officials and stakeholder leaders where specific concerns and comments can be discussed. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Donald Briggs
Chairman

Janice Wiles
Member

Winifred G Palmer, PhD
Member

The Frederick County Sustainability Commission advances and accelerates the adoption of measurable strategies that solve environmental problems, protect critical natural resources, and strengthen our social and economic health now and in the future.