



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **As Maryland Submits its Clean Water Plan to the EPA, Many County Plans Show Much Work to be Done before July**

*Conservation Organizations Say Counties Have Time to Rectify,  
Cite Local Benefits of Reducing Pollution*

(Annapolis, MD) – With Maryland due to release its draft State-wide Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan today, as required by the Environmental Protection Agency, a coalition of conservation organizations expressed concern about the weak or incomplete pollution reduction plans submitted by many local governments. However, advocates stress that local governments still have time to produce strong clean water plans before the July 2012 final deadline.

“After decades of voluntary agreements that have failed, the Chesapeake Bay and most of Maryland’s rivers and streams remain polluted, which is bad for public health and damages our economy,” said Jennifer Bevan-Dangel of 1000 Friends of Maryland. “But there is a solution: commitments from both State and local governments to establish plans that will achieve pollution limits and make our waters fishable and swimmable again.”

“This effort is really about cleaning up our local waters,” Bevan-Dangel added. “Restoring the Chesapeake Bay starts in our backyards – in the rivers and streams our families know and love. That’s why we are disappointed with many of the county plans submitted to the State that fail to commit to specific strategies. The good news is that we believe working on these plans has caused counties to think differently about how they can structure staff, resources, and funding to meet clean water goals.”

While several county plans provide insufficient detail, Bevan-Dangel said there are exceptions. “Baltimore County’s plan begins to provide reasonable assurance that clean water goals will be met and includes a thorough, science-based analysis of the actions needed to reduce pollution,” said Bevan-Dangel. “Likewise, plans submitted by St. Mary’s and Dorchester Counties offer a clear assessment of current capacity and identify solid next steps for action.”

“But many plans simply report previous actions and actions counties could possibly undertake in the future, and they lack measurable results, potential funding sources, and a clear path forward,” Bevan-Dangel added. “Many of the two-year milestones that the EPA requires to measure progress are even more vague.”

Counties have between now and July 2012 to improve or refine their local plans and to ensure results for clean water. Bevan-Dangel noted that Marylanders who want local rivers and streams to be healthy will be watching and holding county governments accountable.

While advocates will be reviewing the State plan carefully, they are primarily focused on progress at the local level. The Choose Clean Water Coalition of hundreds of conservation organizations working across the Bay region are closely evaluating all local submissions and milestones and plan to provide the public with a measurement of each county’s progress early in 2012.

“While we haven’t yet seen the State-wide draft Phase II Watershed Implementation Plan,” said Bevan-Dangel, “we are hopeful it will include specific implementation actions for each pollution source, steps needed to advance proposed strategies including funding and regulatory tools, and 2-year milestones for measuring progress.”

In its December 29, 2010 letter, the Environmental Protection Agency cited possible consequences for states that do not comply with the Bay “pollution diet,” including denying permits, requiring additional pollution reductions, and withholding federal funding.

Conservation advocates across the State stress the local benefits of reducing pollution, including higher property values, healthy water in local rivers and streams, safe places to swim and to fish, protected drinking water, local jobs, and thriving tourism and seafood industries.

Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans are due December 15, 2011, from Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, New York and the District of Columbia in order to comply with the Environmental Protection Agency’s legally established timelines under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load “pollution diet.” These Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans are intended to provide a “road map” of how each jurisdiction will achieve necessary nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reductions by 2025.

Read a fact sheet about the Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans and the Bay “pollution diet” [here](#).

### **Marylanders Talk about Why Clean Water Matters to Them**

- ***Beth Ann Lynch, Dorchester County:*** “My husband and I live in Cambridge. He loves to fish for Rockfish. We'd like to eat it two or three times a week -- more than the once a month that is recommended by the Maryland Department of the Environment. Clean water is important for safe fish!”
- ***John Groutt, Wicomico County:*** "Not too long ago the Wicomico River running through Salisbury was one of the best bass rivers on the Atlantic coast. The river still has bass, but no one dares eat them because of the heavy pollutants in the river. The fish caught are often covered with open sores. We believe this could reverse back to what it was in the recent past. That is the goal of a coalition of environmental groups (Wicomico Environmental Trust, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Wicomico Creek Watchers, Friends of the Nanticoke River) working in conjunction with the Mayor's committee for the Wicomico River."
- ***Brent Bolin, Prince George’s County:*** “Clean water matters in the Anacostia River because a fishable and swimmable river should be the right of all people. In July 2011, the hottest month on record in DC, every time I was out on the river I saw people out there swimming -- seeking relief from the heat. It is very unsafe to swim in the Anacostia and normally people swimming there is an uncommon sight. Many of the folks I saw were non-English speaking or swimming near lower income neighborhood, raising serious social justice questions. Our rivers should be community assets so that people *can* swim in them on hot days, or fish there when they are hungry.”
- ***Isabel Junkin, Kent/Queen Anne’s:*** “I live in Chestertown. One day after a heavy rain I was driving across the Chestertown bridge and noticed a winding ribbon of green algae smearing the surface of the Chester River, extending as far upstream as I could see. This was not natural. We need our rivers healthy again; we need clean water.”
- ***Bruce Gilmore, Baltimore City:*** “I was very proud when Baltimore City government, community and business leaders and the environmental advocacy community pledged to achieve a swimmable and fishable Baltimore Harbor by 2020. However, if the WIPs are weak, there will be

no clean harbor and no clean Bay, and the pledge is meaningless! Strong WIPs are a precondition to achieving the pledge for Baltimore waters.”

- **Jim Long, Charles County:** “Until recently, Mattawoman Creek was known as the best fish nursery in the Bay. Now, fishery scientists tell us its health is failing from watershed urbanization. Last summer, volunteers had to cancel a kayak outing to monitor water quality because an algal bloom caused a health advisory. It is past time to reign in pollution!”
- **Alan Girard, Talbot County:** “In November, hundreds of people attended Clean Water Week in Easton and heard about the promise of making the Bay’s local rivers and streams fishable and swimmable in ten years. There’s definitely an eagerness now about seeing whether a promise made is a promise kept.”
- **Erik Michelson, Anne Arundel County:** “Clean water is critical to the South River because without it, the health of people spending time on the river is at risk. Bacterial infections, illness, and filthy water are not acceptable in one of the wealthiest states in one of the wealthiest nations in the world.”

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The [Choose Clean Water Coalition](#) brings together people and more than 200 organizations from Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia, working together to ensure clean rivers and streams flowing to a restored Chesapeake Bay.