



*1000 Friends of Maryland * Anacostia Watershed Society *
Assateague Coastkeeper/Assateague Coastal Trust * Blue Water
Baltimore * Chesapeake Bay Foundation * Chesapeake Climate
Action Network * Clean Water Action * Environment Maryland *
Maryland League of Conservation Voters * Maryland Pesticide
Network * Maryland PIRG * Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy *
Sierra Club, Maryland Chapter * South River Federation * West-
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NEWS RELEASE

April 11, 2011

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Legislators Pass the Buck on Clean Air, Clean Water, and Public Health Environmental Groups Call for Progress in 2012

Annapolis – Despite a robust start to the 2011 General Assembly Session, overall the legislature failed to enact significant protections for Marylanders’ water, air, and public health. Legislators missed a number of opportunities to make long-term investments in the state, leaving citizens and those that care about the environment exasperated.

In January the legislative session opened strong, with Governor O’Malley offering a budget that supported environmental programs and bills to promote off-shore wind energy and restrict pollution from septic systems. The members of the General Assembly supported a strong environmental budget but failed to adopt key measures and many other proposals to ensure clean water and healthier air for Maryland families.

As session drew to a close it became clear that many legislators chose perceived short-term economic savings over long-term investments in our economy, our environment, and the health of communities. This decision-making costs the citizens of Maryland far more in the long run. Unfortunately, many legislators sided with the opponents of environmental bills, who used economic scare tactics to block progress for Maryland families. In 2011, cynicism won over progress.

Voters across Maryland want clean drinking water, clean air, clean sources of energy, and sustainable jobs. A majority of both the new and returning legislators were elected for their pro-environment platform. People want progress on the environment and sustainable jobs, not continued delay. The clock is ticking.

Legislators began conversations on several key issues, especially on meeting Chesapeake Bay restoration deadlines, reducing polluting development on septic systems, and tackling failing stormwater infrastructure. As the clock struck midnight on April 11th, it became clear that 2011 was a year of inaction. Environmental groups demand that 2012 sees real progress for Marylanders, our environment, and the long-term health of our economy.

Summary of Key Environmental Issues:

- **WINS:** The environment saw wins on legislation to reduce pollution from lawn fertilizer (SB487, Sens. Middleton/Frosh and HB573, Dels. Hubbard/Wood), as well as obtaining record funding for the Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund (\$23.5 million) and protecting most land conservation funds (\$10 million was cut from Rural Legacy).
- **SETBACKS:** The legislators missed important opportunities to regulate natural gas extraction from Marcellus Shale (HB 852, Del. Mizeur), promote wind power (SB861/HB1054, Administration), and reduce pollution from plastic bags (SB602, Sen. Raskin/HB1034, Del. Carr).
- **BEGINNINGS:** Advocates are committed to bring back legislation to reduce sprawl through regulations on new septic systems (SB 846, Sen. Pinsky/HB1107, Del. Lafferty) and create a funding source for failing stormwater infrastructure (Sen. Raskin, Del. Hucker).

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