



MARYLAND LEAGUE  
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

# 2015 ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATIVE WRAP-UP

April 14, 2015

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Dear Conservation Voter,

Despite a new administration and over 60 new legislators, the 2015 Maryland General Assembly passed several smart environmental policies to ensure Maryland is a healthy and prosperous place for families and communities, to protect the Chesapeake Bay and local waters, and to promote clean energy. As the session ended at midnight, our legislators heard our voices loud and clear that Marylanders value the environment.

With Speaker Busch's leadership, we stopped the rollbacks of the polluted runoff fee and worked with leaders like President Miller to improve the law. We also worked hard to ensure that agriculture has the tools necessary to reduce phosphorous in the Bay.

A huge victory this session was the Legislature's passage of a 2.5 year fracking moratorium. We thank the General Assembly for their leadership on this issue and we call on Governor Hogan to sign the bill to protect the health and safety of Marylanders statewide.

We are pleased that the Community Solar bill passed to help make solar energy more available to all Marylanders. While we are disappointed that the Clean Energy Advancement Act was voted down, we thank Chair Middleton, Senator Feldman, and Delegate Frick for their leadership. We also are disappointed that efforts to relieve overburdened low income communities of color from harmful air pollution were again denied in committee.

We couldn't have made such great progress without you. We look forward to continuing our work together to protect Maryland and our future.

Karla Raettig  
Executive Director

## 2015 GENERAL ASSEMBLY WINNERS & LOSERS

Clean Energy Advancement Act		Fracking Moratorium	
Defending the Polluted Water Law		Pollinator Protection Act	
Phosphorous Management Tool		The State Budget	
Environmental Justice – Cumulative Air Impact Analysis			

## Ambient Air Quality Control– Cumulative Air Impact Analysis

SB 693 Sen. Ramirez/ HB 987 Del. Lam



This bill would have required the Department of the Environment to conduct a cumulative impact analysis to examine the full potential pollution burden on the community. This policy would have applied to new air permits for construction in Health Enterprise Zones. This bill had an unfavorable report in the House Environment and Transportation committee.

## Clean Energy Advancement Act

SB 373 Sen. Feldman, Madaleno /HB 377 Del Frick, Barnes



More than 85% of Marylanders live in areas that fail to meet the nation's safe air standards, exposing them to harmful air pollution, sickness and contamination in our waters. Right now we are on track with our current clean electricity standard or Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). The amended version of the bill, that ultimately died in the Senate Finance committee, would raise the standard to 25% by 2020, which would have put Maryland on track to reach 40% renewable energy by 2025.

## Fracking Moratorium

HB 449 Del. Fraser-Hidalgo/SB 409 Sen. Montgomery



The bill institutes a 2.5 year moratorium on fracking, with no permits or drilling until October 2017, and with regulations being promulgated in October 2016. It passed with bipartisan support in both chambers. Maryland needs more time to carefully assess the impacts of fracking.

## Phosphorous Management Tool (PMT)

SB 257 Sen. Pinsky, Conway/ HB 381 Del. Lafferty, Robinson



The PMT is a scientifically valid system that helps farmers determine how much phosphorous can be safely spread on their fields. While this bill did not pass, it helped ensure the administration promulgated strong regulations to ensure that agriculture has the tools necessary to reduce phosphorous in the Bay.

## Pollinator Protector Act

SB 163 Sen. Nathan-Pulliam/ HB 605 Del. Healey



This bill would have required that any plants, seeds or nursery stock treated with neonicotinoid pesticides must include a label that indicates it contributes to bee deaths. It also would have restricted the purchase of neonicotinoid pesticides to certified applicators, farmers, and veterinarians. Unfortunately, due to misinformation, the bill died in the House Environment and Transportation committee. The committee believes we need more studies linking these harmful pesticides to public health and bee deaths.

## Watershed Protection and Restoration Programs

SB 863 President Miller



After rejecting numerous bills to repeal the polluted runoff law, we initially opposed SB863, but worked with sponsors on a set of strengthening amendments. Our work throughout the legislative process significantly altered the bill, with the community removing opposition to the Senate version and then switching to supporting the bill as revised by the House Environment and Transportation Committee and passed by Speaker Busch. The final bipartisan bill provides counties flexibility in how polluted runoff remediation projects are funded in exchange for increased accountability and strict penalties for failing to meet funding requirements.

## Stop the Budget Rollbacks and Raids

HB 70 & HB 72 Governor Hogan



The legislature reconciled together for the following budget:

- 2010 Fund: \$40.1 million with \$8.6 million that was diverted out of the fund, which is the smallest diversion since the fund's inception
- Program Open Space and other programs – allocated \$87.1 million for land preservation programs, Rural Legacy, Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation, Community Parks and Playgrounds, DNR Critical Maintenance, Natural Resource Development and Ocean City Beach Replenishment. This represents 70% of what would have been allocated if there was no diversion of transfer tax revenue. Overall Governor Hogan proposed and the General Assembly approved a \$115 million diversion of transfer tax revenue from these programs to the general fund.

## Other Environmentally Important Bills



**Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund (SB 28/ HB 302):** This bill would have lockboxed the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays 2010 Trust Fund to pollution reduction programs unless the Governor declares a fiscal emergency and 3/5 of the General Assembly voted in support. After passing unanimously out of the senate, this bill died in the House Environment and Transportation committee.



**Community Solar Energy Program (SB 481/ HB 1087):** Expands access to solar energy for renters and others who aren't able install solar panels on their own homes. This is a 3 year pilot with a concurrent study.



**Hydraulic Fracturing Liability Act (SB 458):** This would have strengthened existing law for legal liability to protect people's rights in court should fracking damage their health, property, or the environment. This bill died in the House Environment and Transportation committee.



**Nitrogen Oxide Emissions– Pollution and Combustion Control Techniques (HB 1042):** This would have established new protections against air pollution from coal-fired power plants, including giving plant owners multiple options and until 2020 to fully implement changes. The bill was introduced after Governor Hogan pulled similar regulations on his first day in office. Complicated by conversations around the regulatory process, this bill never received a vote.



**Offshore Wind– Application for Proposed Project (SB 899):** This bill prohibits wind energy development in a vast majority of the state and voids the Wind Energy Act of 2013. It died in the Senate Finance committee.



**Public Information Act– modification (SB 695/HB 755 ):** Updates the Maryland Public Information Act so that Marylanders have fair and open access to government-funded data and information about their civil liberties and public health. This bill passed but did not include provisions for agricultural business transparency. We will continue to work on this issue.



**Sale of Electric and Non-Fossil Fuel Burning Vehicles (HB 235):** The bill authorizes manufacturers, such as Tesla, that only sell electric or non-fossil fuel burning vehicles to be valid car dealerships. This job-creating legislation will increase the sale of electric vehicles.



**State Lakes Invasive Species Act (HB 860):** Requires owners to clean their boats of visible organic material before placing them in state owned and operated lakes as of April 1, 2017. Gives DNR broad leeway to educate about and enforce the law and gives them more than a year to plan. Will not require any additional DNR staffing or resources (per fiscal note.)



**Synthetic Plastic Microbead Prohibition (SB 200/HB 216):** Bans the sale and manufacture of products containing synthetic plastic microbeads, which are found in cosmetics and other products.

# Get Involved

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- **Join our subscribers who sent over 10,000 emails to legislators throughout this 2015 session speaking up for air, land, water and people**
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- **Volunteer with our dedicated team to educate Maryland on environmental issues.**



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## Maryland League of Conservation Voters

POLITICAL VOICE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Maryland League of Conservation Voters (LCV) is a state-wide, nonpartisan organization that uses political action and education to protect our air, land and water. Maryland LCV endorses and elects pro-conservation candidates and holds elected officials accountable through our scorecards. A leading legislative watchdog in Annapolis, we have advocated for smart environmental policies for nearly 35 years, working to make Maryland a healthy and prosperous place for families and communities. Maryland LCV protects public health by fighting for the Chesapeake Bay and local waters, preserving green spaces, promoting smarter growth and increasing Maryland's investment in clean energy.