Dear Environment Maryland members,

If there were ever a time to be optimistic about cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay, now is it.

You might call our optimism crazy, and, I suppose, you’d have good reason. After decades of cleanup efforts, we have far too little to show for them. You might ask what’s so different today. Here’s our answer.

A federal court recently declared that effective Bay cleanup plans cannot wait. The president of the United States has set firm deadlines. And the Environmental Protection Agency is finally pushing states to do what it takes to truly restore the Bay. To take advantage of this golden opportunity, we’ve mobilized thousands of people to urge Gov. Martin O’Malley to get the cleanup plans right.

But it’s not enough. The Bay has stayed polluted all these years because mighty special interests keep pushing our leaders to maintain the status quo. Big developers and the corporate agribusiness lobby stubbornly resist progress on the Bay.

They’ll stop at little to win, and we should match their determination. That means we’ll need your help to keep upping the ante to finally win lasting protections for the Chesapeake Bay—and every body of water in Maryland.

I’d like to offer my sincere thanks for your support in 2010. With you by our side, I look forward to confronting the challenges and seizing the opportunities the new year will present.

Sincerely,

Brad Heavner
State Director

tommy landers
Policy advocate

Meg Cronin
Policy Associate

Jonathon Wong
Campaign Associate

Repower Maryland

100,000 solar roofs and offshore wind

In 2010, we moved closer to our goal of 100,000 solar roofs over the next 10 years, as the General Assembly passed two of Environment Maryland’s legislative priorities. One new law accelerates requirements to draw more of our state’s energy from the sun, and the other will require utility companies to pay customers for the excess power their solar panels generate.

Environment Maryland has also ramped up our efforts to support construction of an offshore wind farm 12 miles off the coast of Ocean City, a move that would reduce statewide carbon pollution and help maintain reliable electricity rates. Our research shows that the mid-Atlantic region could eventually get one-third of our electricity from offshore wind farms. We demonstrated local support in Ocean City with a packed-house town hall meeting, and letters of support from local tourism and industry leaders.
Restore the Chesapeake Bay

A promising Bay restoration plan got underway

This year, as Maryland and other states in the Bay region develop plans to meet new pollution budgets set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, we have our best opportunity in a generation to restore the Chesapeake Bay—and Environment Maryland has jumped on this golden opportunity.

As Gov. Martin O’Malley crafts our state’s action plan, we’re urging him to incorporate provisions that would target the largest source of pollution: agricultural runoff.

Throughout the year, Environment Maryland has pressed Gov. O’Malley to require agricultural companies to clean up their act—and, in his plan’s first draft, the governor agreed to create new restrictions on some of the Bay’s biggest polluters.

600 million pounds of manure every year

Today, poultry companies like Perdue and Tyson are reaping enormous profits while fouling the Bay, processing 300 million chickens in Maryland every year. Nutrient pollution from the resulting 600 million pounds of manure fuels dead zones that span up to one-third of the Chesapeake Bay every summer.

The comprehensive cleanup plan that we’re promoting would prohibit farmers from spreading manure on soil that is over-saturated with nitrogen and phosphorous, and would mandate more pollution reduction measures, like buffer zones between farms and waterways.

Petitions delivered, farmers organized

In support of these efforts, Environment Maryland collected more than 2,000 petition signatures to Gov. O’Malley urging him to make the most of this opportunity, and we recruited more than 50 local farmers to call on the governor to hold agricultural companies accountable for their pollution.

We also brought together more than 150 concerned Marylanders at a rally in Baltimore, where attendees heard from leaders in conservation, education, environmental justice and the faith community about the urgency of this opportunity.

“Decisions are being made today that will affect the Chesapeake Bay for the next 10 to 20 years. If we get this right now and take advantage of this tremendous opportunity, we could finally get on track to a vibrant, healthy Chesapeake Bay,” said Environment Maryland’s Tommy Landers.

Tommy Landers, Environment Maryland Policy Advocate, speaking on behalf of concerned Marylanders and leaders at the Rally for the Chesapeake.
Global warming solutions

Toward cutting pollution by 25 percent

Under a law we helped pass last year, Maryland is committed to slashing our global warming pollution by 25 percent by 2020. We’ll achieve this goal, however, only if rules and policies designed to carry out the law have real teeth. So far, we’ve already been successful in new policies aimed at improving Maryland’s transportation system and our state’s electricity plan.

Previously, important decisions on how to spend transportation funds were made behind closed doors, and the Department of Transportation had wide latitude in deciding which projects got funded. Now the department will have to prioritize the transportation projects that best promote smart urban growth and make sure our transportation plan keeps us within the global warming pollution cap.

In addition, the state will now weigh global warming pollution when determining a long-range energy plan. This new policy, established by an executive order issued by Gov. Martin O’Malley, was based on a bill that Environment Maryland advocated in this year’s legislative session to place clean energy options on a level playing field with more traditional power plants. As a result, Maryland will soon begin comparing energy proposals and their environmental impacts before making important decisions.

Dirty power lines opposed

Two proposed interstate power transmission lines threaten to offset recent gains on global warming pollution. The two lines in question would bring dirty coal power to Maryland from West Virginia and Virginia. Such a move would undercut carbon reductions in Maryland and exacerbate our reliance on dirty, out-of-state power.

Environment Maryland co-hosted a major rally at the Public Service Commission opposing the construction of the transmission lines, and has continued urging the commission to deny permits for the power lines.

Study documented the value of “building better”

Beyond tapping the wind and sun, Maryland families can further reduce their carbon footprint by investing in more energy-efficient homes—an investment that could save the typical family $1,700 per year on energy bills by 2050. Environment Maryland researchers calculated these savings as part of a report, released in March, entitled “Building Better.”

Our researchers pored over government data and found that improved building standards could save enough energy across the country to power 235 million homes every year.
Stopping offshore drilling

Maryland to President Obama: No rigs near the Bay

This summer’s disaster in the Gulf is further proof that drilling is still dirty and still dangerous—but the door is still open to drilling near the mouth of the Chesapeake Bay, where endangered turtles, whales and dolphins live.

In 2010, our national federation helped generate more than 25,000 signatures to President Barack Obama, asking him to restore the moratorium on drilling off our shores and afford permanent protections for our coastline.

When President Obama originally announced his plan for expanded drilling on March 31, we helped unite a coalition of environmental groups, public health organizations, consumer advocates and national security groups to build a campaign to end America’s addiction to oil.

Report detailed the promise of 100 mpg cars

Increasing Maryland’s use of plug-in electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles would dramatically reduce our pollution, including the gases that cause global warming. It would also curb our dependence on oil, according to a report released by Environment Maryland in June, titled “Charging Ahead.”

A “plug-in” car can be recharged from the electric grid. Some plug-in cars run on electricity alone, while others are paired with small gasoline engines to create plug-in hybrids. Many plug-in hybrids can travel more than 100 miles on a gallon of gas, while plug-in electric vehicles consume no gasoline at all.

If three-fourths of American vehicles were electric, oil use would be reduced by about one-third. Our findings indicate the amount of oil saved would be equivalent to more than twice as much as the United States imports from the Persian Gulf annually.
Foundation support
The Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center is a 501(c)(3) organization, and conducts research and public education on emerging environmental issues. Contributions to the Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center are tax-deductible. To find out more, contact Brad Heavner at (410) 467-0439.

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Charts reflect combined financial information for the environmental work conducted by Environment Maryland, the Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center and Environment Maryland’s citizen outreach programs.

Building a greener future
Environment Maryland and Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center gratefully accept bequests, beneficiary designations of IRAs and life insurance, and gifts of securities to support our work. Your gift will assure that we can continue to protect Maryland’s air, water and open spaces for future generations. For more information, call 1-800-841-7299 or e-mail PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMaryland.org.