2011 Annual Report
A review of the progress we’ve made.
Dear Environment Maryland members,

For Maryland's environment, this has been a year of laying foundations. The state is kicking off a pair of critical new plans—one to reduce global warming pollution 25 percent by 2020, and the other to finally put the Chesapeake Bay on a sustainable path to recovery over the next decade. As these plans get underway, the outlook is promising—but we have our work cut out for us.

The same special interests that have spent decades fighting for the status quo are now using their considerable political clout to block serious reforms to clean up our air and water. At the time of this writing, for example, national alliances of developers and agribusinesses are suing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency over its long-overdue plan to restore the Bay.

We’re still convinced that even in the face of such stiff opposition, we can channel Marylanders' love for the Bay and concern over global warming into strong, lasting protections for our environment. I hope you’ll be there with us.

Sincerely,

Tommy Landers
Campaign Director
Healthy Farms

From the first pint of strawberries in June, to the last crisp red apple of fall, the abundance of Maryland’s 137 farmers markets is impressive and growing. Unfortunately, most of our food still comes from industrial agribusiness, which fouls our water and pollutes the air. That’s why we set out to support sustainable farming—to help ensure the way we grow our food helps the environment instead of hurting it.

United for sustainable farming

The way we grow and distribute our food has a tremendous impact on the health of our air, the Chesapeake Bay, and all our waters. So shifting to local, sustainably-grown food is one of the most important actions we can take for our environment.

This summer, Environment Maryland organizers spoke with more than 40,000 Marylanders about the importance of sustainable agriculture, and they collected more than 5,000 petition signatures in support of food distribution hubs for local farmers.

- Over the summer, we reached out to local farmers, who spoke to us about the importance of their work and what changes they would like to see.

- We have also been building public support to strengthen Maryland’s Farm to School program, which will help expand markets for local farmers and provide healthier food for our children.
Fighting for the Bay

For decades, Marylanders have seen the Chesapeake Bay suffer from more pollution than it can handle. Year after year, we’ve fallen short of our cleanup goals, because restoration measures were too often voluntary, and the penalties for failing to comply were too weak. This year, Environment Maryland succeeded in pushing Gov. Martin O’Malley to take bolder measures to start moving us beyond the status quo.

New fertilizer law will curb pollution

This spring, Gov. O’Malley signed into law an Environment Maryland-backed bill to make fertilizer more environmentally friendly. The new law will ease the Bay’s annual algae blooms and shrink the sprawling dead zones that can consume up to one-third of the Bay’s waters every summer.

- Urban and suburban grass, which covers everything from lawns to golf courses, can be thought of as Maryland’s largest crop, outpacing even corn and soy. And the nutrients in the fertilizers we use to help that grass grow also contribute to the algae blooms and dead zones in the Bay.

- According to recent research by the Chesapeake Stormwater Network, 23 percent of Maryland is covered by grass and other forms of turf cover that can act as a conduit for nutrient pollution into the Bay. The same study indicates that Marylanders apply upwards of 63 million pounds of nitrogen and 5 million pounds of phosphorus to their home lawns every year.

- The 2011 law mandates that fertilizer contain lower levels of both nitrogen and phosphorus, significantly decreasing the flow of both nutrients into the Bay.
Renewed efforts to clean up factory farms

The new fertilizer law is an encouraging step forward—but it’s only one piece of the puzzle. Before we can truly restore the Bay, enormous chicken companies need to take responsibility for the roughly 600 million pounds of manure they create in Maryland every year.

• Our research confirms there’s more chicken manure produced in Maryland than can be reasonably applied to farmland as fertilizer. So today, after years of over-applying manure to fields, much of our soil has become saturated like a wet sponge with pollution.

• Environment Maryland successfully pushed Gov. O’Malley to propose new rules to limit the amount of manure that can be applied to the land, to help draw down historic levels of nutrient pollution in the soil.

• Thanks to our ongoing work, the Maryland Department of Agriculture has also begun writing commonsense rules to limit other pollution from farmland—such as instituting buffer zones between crop fields and nearby waterways where no manure can be applied.

At left: A fish kill washes up on the shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay. At right: Program Associate Megan Cronin speaks alongside U.S. Sen. Ben Cardin about reducing pollution in the Chesapeake Bay.
Our clean energy future

We all know global warming is a daunting problem—but it’s one that can be addressed by reducing pollution and kick-starting a clean energy economy in Maryland and across the country. At the state level, Maryland has set ambitious goals to move us past our reliance on fossil fuels. Now, it’s time for the rubber to hit the road.

New steps to cut global warming pollution

Environment Maryland played a pivotal role in 2009 in Maryland’s adoption of an ambitious, but achievable, goal for Maryland: Reduce global warming emissions by 25 percent by 2020. At the end of 2011, the state faces its first deadline in the process: finalizing an initial blueprint—a set of new rules and actions—that will get us there. As of now, the state is lagging behind in actual pollution reduction efforts, but, as our research confirms, there’s still time to catch up.

• Environment Maryland Research & Policy Center produced a report, “Too Little, But Not Too Late,” that revealed the state of Maryland can still reach its original goals. But to get there, state leaders need to act quickly on global warming solutions, such as increasing the energy efficiency of homes and businesses, investing in more clean energy like solar and wind, and adopting policies to curb urban sprawl.

• This year, working with our sister groups across the country, Environment Maryland helped secure a proposed national 54.5 miles-per-gallon standard for new cars and light trucks by 2025. Cars account for nearly a third of Maryland’s global warming pollution, and this would be the single biggest step forward our country has taken yet to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Offshore wind: The push for turbines off our shores

It’s time for Maryland to transition to a clean energy economy. Unfortunately, the General Assembly let a bill to spur offshore wind power die in committee last year. But large-scale efforts like this almost never succeed in just one year—and starting this summer, we’ve been redoubling our efforts to get a similar bill across the finish line in 2012.

• In support of the offshore wind bill, Environment Maryland hosted public forums, held eight press conferences, produced three research reports, helped industry leaders meet with legislators, circulated a letter signed by Ocean City businesses, arranged testimony from public health experts, mobilized individual citizens to contact decision makers, and more.

• A wind farm off the coast of Ocean City would work in tandem with Maryland’s existing statewide programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by preventing more than 2 million metric tons of global warming pollution per year—the equivalent of taking one in 10 cars off our roads.
Families should be able to breathe clean air and drink clean water—without worrying about mercury in our bloodstream or soot in our lungs. Yet coal-fired power plants and other industrial polluters spew hundreds of thousands of tons of lead, mercury, soot and other dangerous pollutants into our atmosphere every year. We need to protect our health and our children’s health by requiring polluters to clean up their act.

**EPA to cut mercury, save 25,000 lives**

In 2011, the Environmental Protection Agency moved ahead with efforts to significantly reduce mercury, soot and smog pollution from power plants. We expect these standards to save more than 25,000 lives every year. Environment Maryland staff worked with allies across the country to build support to ensure these rules were adopted:

- Along with our sister groups from California to Iowa to Maine, we recruited more than 800,000 people to send comments to the EPA in support of strong action on mercury—no other single EPA rule has ever received so much public support.

- Air pollution from U.S. power plants causes thousands of premature deaths each year and tens of thousands of heart attacks, asthma attacks, emergency room visits, hospital admissions and lost workdays.

- Additionally, carbon dioxide and other global warming pollution is altering our climate in a way that will mean more heat-related deaths, more unhealthy air days and the spread of infectious disease, as well as many negative impacts on our environment.
Congressional attacks voted down

Unfortunately, polluters and their allies in Congress launched a coordinated attack to block these critical safeguards. But after working with our allies in the public health community, lobbying key senators and rallying thousands of our online activists to speak out, we held the line against some of the worst attacks:

• To defend the EPA’s proposed pollution rules in Congress, Environment Maryland joined forces with allied groups throughout the country in generating thousands of emails to our U.S. Senators including Sens. Benjamian Cardin and Barbara Mikulski.

• In March, the Senate rejected a bill that would have blocked standards for soot, mercury and carbon pollution, and in April, the Senate defeated four more bills blocking the EPA from reducing pollution that causes global warming.

The EPA wants to cut mercury emissions by 91 percent—an important step to protect children and pregnant women. Above left: Morgantown Generating Station, along the Potomac River in southern Maryland.