



HARRISBURG REGIONAL CHAMBER™

CAPITAL REGION ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

POSITION STATEMENT

Chesapeake Bay Tributary Strategy

Chair: Bill Cluck

Committee: Environmental

Summary:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) announced mandates/requirements for all sewage/water treatment facilities in the Susquehanna River and Potomac Basins in 2005. These requirements are designed to reach specified goals stated in the 2000 Chesapeake Bay Agreement signed by Gov. Ridge and a legislative assembly including Maryland, Virginia, Washington D.C., and the EPA. These requirements are to be implemented simultaneously with a nutrient management program administered by DEP.

The requirements will impose limitations on the amount of phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediments that all facilities are allowed to discharge, which must be met by 2010. These discharges will be introduced at safe levels to local waterways that feed into the Chesapeake Bay. The DEP has determined that nutrient loading must be reduced to 71.9 million pounds of nitrogen; 2.46 million pounds of phosphorus; and 0.995 million tons of sediment from the current amount of 175 million pounds of nitrogen; 12.8 million pounds of phosphorus; and 4.15 million pounds of sediment.

The cost to meet these reductions involving all stakeholders has been projected to be \$8.2 billion by DEP. Current resolutions proposed in both chambers of the General Assembly will place a moratorium on these actions and begin a discussion on the issue.

Reasons to Support Legislative Moratorium:

- Many treatment facilities currently need to renew their certification in order to continue operation, and are not currently able to meet these requirements by 2010 due to time constraints and funding limitations.
- The cost that many facilities will incur to meet these requirements is projected to be in the millions for individual facilities, and will likely be passed onto residential and commercial consumers.
- Facilities that would need to make improvements in order to meet these reductions do not have ample time to update their equipment, practices, or infrastructure by 2010.
- The agricultural community, local government, individual homeowners/taxpayers, business community, and land developers will need to contribute billions of dollars to reach the pollutant reduction by 2010.

- There is not sufficient funding available by the Commonwealth or the federal government to help municipalities with the cost of these requirements. This will place a disproportionate amount of burden on individual taxpayers, businesses, and farmers through increased rates, taxes, or practices.
- The current levels of phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment reduction are at legal limits by state standards, the reduction that DEP is proposing has been calculated to improve the health of the Chesapeake Bay via Pennsylvania's contribution among its neighboring contributors.
- The Chamber strongly discourages the approach that the Department of Environmental Protection took in enforcing these requirements without legislation, legislative review or oversight, or regulatory review or oversight.
- All stakeholders, legislators, and department officials should collaborate to find the best strategy for Pennsylvania to utilize in its role as a contributor to the Chesapeake Bay.
- The final strategy should be a result of a formal stakeholder process, determination of specific costs associated with the reduction, and an evaluation of the environmental benefits of the strategy, as well as a determination of strategy alternatives.

Summary:

As a result of the anticipated cost to meet the required limits and the possibility that these costly reductions will not have a significant improvement on the Chesapeake Bay, we oppose the department's approach and implementation of this program. *We support the efforts of Sen. Vance and Rep. Nailor to place a moratorium on this process and investigate the best means available to improve the Chesapeake Bay.*

CHAMBER POSITION: SUPPORT Legislative Moratorium

Date: February 2, 2006

Current Applicable Bills: SR207, HR539

Sponsor: Vance, Nailor