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TTY USERS CALL VIA MD RELAY

August 18, 2016

Ms. Brittney Miller
Huntingtown High School
4125 Solomons Island Road
Huntingtown, Maryland 20639

Dear Ms. Miller:

Thank you for your letter regarding the effects of runoff on the Chesapeake Bay and the impacts of nitrogen and phosphorus on water quality. I agree that our key strategies must include both pollution reductions and prevention.

That is why my Administration worked hard to develop a Phosphorous Management Tool. Working with farmers and environmentalists, the Phosphorous Management Tool will be a new tool to help farmers reduce phosphorus on the land in a way that will not economically harm our thriving farming community. The Chesapeake Bay Program hailed this effort as critical to the success of phosphorus reduction in the Bay.

Retaining open space is another way to protect the environment and natural habitats so I fully funded the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund and Program Open Space. To date the Trust Fund has directed more than \$295 million to local governments and organizations to protect our drinking water reservoirs, fisheries, and public health. Trust Fund dollars are used to reduce non-point source pollution, otherwise known as runoff, from agricultural and developed lands, and to support projects for planting trees and creating wetlands. You can track the projects funded by the Trust fund by visiting (http://www.dnr.maryland.gov/ccs/funding/trust_fund.asp).

Additionally, I am committed to restoring oyster populations in Maryland through a variety of strategies including oyster sanctuaries. Maryland has pledged to complete sanctuaries in five tributaries of the Chesapeake Bay. Right now, work is underway in the Little Choptank River and the Tred Avon River and work has been completed in Harris Creek. This is an important step for naturally filtering the water.

The Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load, which is also called a "pollution diet", resulted in Maryland developing a Watershed Implementation Plan which is a course of action for achieving a healthy Bay by 2025. These actions include wastewater treatment plant upgrades, storm-water pollution control, cover crops, and other restoration practices that reduce and prevent pollution.



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The Bay Total Maximum Daily Load also required that the Bay Program Partnership address the impacts of the Conowingo Dam reaching full sediment storage capacity. To this end, my Administration has formed a working group of state, federal and private entities to develop a Request For Information (RFI) to solicit innovative and cost effective ideas on solutions, including beneficial reuse of dredge material, to address the excess sediments and nutrients stored behind the Dam. The RFI was released on August 1st. Dredging is one of many strategies that may be needed to address this significant issue that is the responsibility of all the Chesapeake Bay watershed states and federal partners.

Last but not least, it will take a multi-state commitment to clean up the Bay, particularly since the Chesapeake Bay watershed starts in New York. The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is a plan for collaboration across the Bay's political boundaries. Each state in the *Agreement* must commit to doing their part, including conserving existing forest buffers. It also includes a commitment to restore an additional 900 miles of forest buffers each year until at least 70 percent of the watershed's riparian areas are forested. Maryland has proudly signed on to every commitment contained within the *Agreement* establishing us as a leader in Bay restoration.


While these actions exemplify my commitment to a clean, sustainable Bay, everyone in the watershed can do their part to help meet these goals.

Here are a few suggestions of things you and your classmates can do to help improve the water quality in the Bay:

- You can help stop runoff by building rain barrels and rain gardens to catch the water before it enters local streams and rivers (http://www.dnr.state.md.us/sustainability/rain_garden.asp).
- You can plant native trees and shrubs to help prevent erosion, trap excess nutrients and provide habitat for wildlife (<http://www.dnr.state.md.us/forests/treemendous/>).
- You can stencil storm drains to remind people that anything that goes down the storm drains eventually ends up in the Bay. This makes a great school or community service project and the stencils can be borrowed free from the Department of Natural Resources. For more information, visit the DNR website (www.dnr.state.md.us/education/pdfs/StormDrainStencilForm.pdf).

Once again, thank you for your letter. I appreciate hearing from you, and I thank you for your interest in the Chesapeake Bay. If you have additional questions, or want more information about how you can help, feel free to contact Martha Shaum, toll free at (877) 620-8367 extension 8721, directly at (410) 260-8721, or via email sent to martha.shaum@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,



Larry Hogan
Governor

cc: Martha Shaum, Education Specialist, Chesapeake and Coastal Service, Department of Natural Resources