



DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT ENVIROMATTERS

October 8, 2010

Clean Water, Green Jobs through the Recovery Act



Fifteen months after receiving \$121.6 million in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding for water quality and drinking water projects, we are seeing real results -- both in environmental and public health benefits and in jobs created and saved.

These [85 projects funded through ARRA grants or low-interest loans](#) provide an enormous boost to Maryland communities and to clean water.

At MDE, we are honored to be invited to numerous dedications and ribbon-cutting events for these projects; as of today, 20 ARRA clean water projects have been completed, and many more are close to completion.

As we make these improvements, we are also putting people to work. MDE tracks and reports ARRA-related jobs created and saved on a quarterly basis, based upon certified payroll submitted to MDE. In the third quarter of this calendar year, these ARRA clean water projects created or saved 274 full-time equivalent jobs. These are home-grown jobs that are not outsourced, jobs that provide income for Maryland families.

Many of these projects were desperately needed. In Rhodes Point, Smith Island, due to an antiquated drinking water system, residents at times had no drinking water supply. During these difficult economic times, the small community was at a loss for how to fund a new system. A \$945,000 ARRA grant is now putting a new system in place, and the 40-home community will no longer need to rely on the American Red Cross for bottled water.

In Western Maryland, we faced an altogether different but also critical need. Allegany County's Savage River Dam required urgent repairs to prevent a rupture that could have caused damage downstream. ARRA provided a \$3.9 million grant to replace the gates.

ARRA also funded a brand-new type of "green infrastructure" project, which proved to be so successful that EPA will continue to provide similar funding. These environmentally innovative projects feature water or energy efficiency measures, and we were excited to be able to fund such projects for the first time through ARRA. According to the American Rivers ["Putting Green to Work" report](#) that analyzed how 19 states made use of these "green infrastructure" funds, Maryland "stands out as exemplary" in our use of these funds.

One such project is Edmonston's Green Street, which [made the news last week](#) as Mayor Adam Ortiz testified before Congress about its benefits. Funded in part through a \$1.1 million ARRA grant, this project installs bioretention cells and street swales, rain gardens and trees, and permeable pavers to cut pollution to the Anacostia River and reduce flooding -- all of which benefits local businesses and residents.

Not all "green infrastructure" grants are as large, but

they still have a big impact. A recent letter from the Dennis Point Homeowners Association about their \$529,000 ARRA grant (combined with a \$27,879 grant from the Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund) to install a living shoreline in their Shady Side neighborhood makes that point. The letter said this project "to stem erosion, create successful new marshlands, and protect valuable habitat" was "built in the nick of time, as the last remnant at the 'point' at Dennis Point was about to disappear in to the Bay."



Dennis Point - Before

During the Governor's Capital for a Day in Silver Spring, I also had the privilege of seeing first-hand two [Takoma Park "green infrastructure"](#) projects that clearly demonstrated how reducing polluted stormwater runoff can also provide terrific quality of life benefits to a community.



Dennis Point - After

Of course, ARRA also funded traditional, pollution-cutting infrastructure projects, like the \$7.5 million loan to help fund the Ballenger Creek wastewater treatment plant upgrade, the \$683,000 loan to improve sewers in Chesapeake Beach, and the \$1.4 million grant to repair and replacement a faulty sewer collection system in Hagerstown.

All these projects demonstrate that cleaning up local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay, protecting drinking water, and using resources efficiently have both economic and environmental benefits.



Ballenger Creek
Wastewater Treatment
Plant

From the construction workers I've talked to, and the sites I've been fortunate enough to visit, these projects have a real benefit every day for the people whose communities are benefitting now and will benefit for years or decades to come. Green improvements are providing cleaner water.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shan Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Martin O'Malley, Governor | Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor | Shan Wilson, Secretary



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