

Inside Baseball, MDE Operations and the Budget

As summer warms up and thoughts turn to outdoor pastimes, I want to update you on what, to some, may be “inside baseball” here at MDE. If you are interested in MDE’s operations and how we are addressing fiscal issues, please read on. For the rest of our readers — we will be in touch next month with a more direct focus on environmental issues.

One of three priorities for MDE operations since 2007 has been our fiscal status. Following previous observations by MDE staff, recommendations from Governor O’Malley’s Transition Team, and declining federal revenues, MDE completed a “2007 Fiscal Study” and “2009 Update.” These reports analyzed revenue and expenditure trends and provide a basis for realigning scarce resources to the highest priorities. As a result, effective July 2009, MDE is

making a few organizational changes to increase efficiency, put the Agency in the strongest position possible given the tight budget forecast for FY 2011, and ensure limited resources are placed on the highest priorities. These changes are designed to be seamless to our external stakeholders.

Efficiency in Funding Water Projects

The Water Quality Infrastructure Program, currently in the Water Management Administration, is responsible for funding water, sewer, and other environmental projects across the State (including \$122 million in stimulus funding for clean water under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act) and will be relocated to the Office of Budget & Finance. This will increase efficiency in oversight and management of capital resources and improve administration of State and Federal grant and loan programs. The Bay Restoration Fund On-site

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Sewage Disposal Grant Program will also be moved to the Office of Budget & Finance, consolidating management of Bay Restoration Fund resources.

What's In a Name?

When it comes to “waste,” it turns out a name speaks volumes. Since the inception of MDE, programs to clean up historically contaminated sites, oversee cradle-to-grave regulation of hazardous waste, clean up more recent releases of petroleum and chemicals, and control landfills and reuse of sewage sludge have collectively been known as “waste management.” These programs have been enormously successful. In the 1980s, new programs transformed a situation involving nearly a thousand potentially contaminated properties, into a systematic hierarchy to categorize, prioritize, and clean up these sites and to regulate and reduce the volume of materials constituting a waste — all for the protection of public health and our groundwater supply.

As was the case in the early 1980s, today we face another challenge — one that also presents great opportunity: turning materials traditionally

considered waste into materials that can be recycled. As one example, Maryland’s Climate Action Plan concluded a significant carbon reduction can result from reusing, rather than discarding, demolition debris — a premise demonstrated successfully by several recent projects in Baltimore.

To reflect the focus on sustainability, reducing the state’s carbon footprint, and increase the use of traditional wastes as resources, MDE’s Waste Management Administration is being renamed the Land Management Administration.

Consolidating Expertise, Increasing Efficiency

The Agency’s Bureau of Mining, currently in the Water Management Administration and responsible for overseeing permitting of new mines and restoration of closed mines, is moving to the Land Management Administration. The new permitting program for regulation and disposal of coal combustion byproducts, including fly ash, will also be located within Land Management. This change further consolidates ground-



water remediation programs. The new Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations regulatory program will also be moved into MDE's other major nutrient related program, the sewage sludge application program. This change consolidates MDE staff routinely working with nutrient management plans.

Targeting our Talent to the Highest Needs

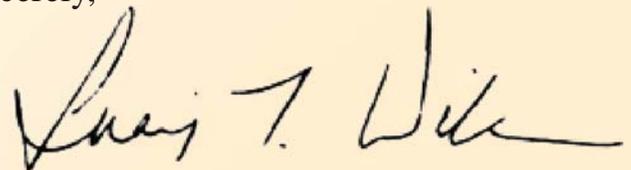
To fill resource gaps, Permitting and Customer Service Center staff are being reassigned to higher priority areas. This change also reflects the

large investment by MDE in a Department-wide electronic permitting system. Questions about a permit? Please consult the Permitting Guide online at www.mde.state.md.us for the appropriate contact person or call 410-537-3000.

As always, MDE's commitment is to be transparent, provide the best service possible, and strive for continual improvement. These changes enhance each of those goals. Inside Baseball? Maybe. An efficiency improvement? Yes, that is our goal. On behalf of our staff, thank you for your continued interest in Maryland's environment.



Sincerely,



Shari T. Wilson, Secretary
Maryland Department of the Environment