

GOVERNOR PARRIS N. GLENDENING ENVIRONMENTAL ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Smart Growth

In 1997, as the crisis of urban sprawl was settling firmly in the national consciousness, the State of Maryland launched a innovative effort to recast the policy framework in which development decisions are made. The Smart Growth and Neighborhood Conservation Initiative, which has been evolving ever since, immediately captured the attention and interest of policymakers nationwide.

The Governor's signature initiative is designed to

- Support and revitalize existing communities by targeting state resources to those areas that are already developed,
- Preserve critical farmland and natural resources, and
- Save taxpayers millions of dollars in unnecessary costs of building infrastructure required to support sprawl.

Chesapeake 2000

The landmark agreement that guides Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts in the new century. Highlights include increasing oyster populations tenfold; expanding Bay grass beds and wetlands; removing the Bay from the Environmental Protection Agency's Impaired Waters list; enhancing cooperation with local governments; reducing harmful sprawl development by 30 percent; and preserving 20 percent of the watershed's land area from development.

Coastal Bays Agreement

For three years, local residents and other representatives from the development, farming, fishing, golf and tourism industries worked with scientists and planners from a host of state and federal agencies to develop common sense solutions for protecting the bays behind Ocean City and Assateague State Park and National Seashore. In 1999, the Governor joined the Worcester County Commissioners, the EPA and the mayors of Ocean City and Berlin in signing a comprehensive conservation management plan, specifying management goals and strategies for protecting the coastal bays, including many actions relevant to improved water quality and living resource protection.

Land Preservation

For the first time, Maryland is protecting land as fast as it is being developed.

The GreenPrint and Rural Legacy Programs have received national recognition.

- The Rural Legacy Program protects natural resources lands and the fabric of rural Maryland. Since 1998, more than 35,000 acres have been protected.
- The GreenPrint Program targets protection of the most ecologically valuable land remaining in the state. Since enactment in 2001, the program has protected 10,325 acres.

Water Quality

- The restoration of streams and creeks is an important component of water quality improvement. In the last eight years, funding has been provided to restore more than 144,000 linear feet of streams statewide. In addition, \$9.8 million has been spent to retrofit stormwater systems in existing communities.
- Funding for biological nutrient reduction at wastewater treatment plants has significantly increased. More than \$137 million has been given as grants to upgrade sewage treatment systems over the last eight years, and \$480 million has been provided in low-interest loans to local governments.
- In 1997, Maryland became the first state to join the federal government in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which improves water quality and wildlife habitat. To date, almost 50,000 acres have been enrolled in this program, which works with farmers to create buffers and wetlands along streams and rivers.
- The 1998 Water Quality Protection Act requires farmers to have nutrient management plans to limit nutrient run-off.