

VISION 2025

MARYLAND LEAGUE OF CONSERVATION VOTERS EDUCATION FUND

2018 Issue Guide



Maryland in 2018

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUES

Maryland League of Conservation Voters Education Fund is dedicated to building the effectiveness of the environmental community by maximizing participation of conservation-minded individuals in public policy decisions. We are proud to present this guide to help Marylanders understand the issues facing our state over the next four years.

With a federal administration whose weakened regulatory agencies have gutted environmental protection, and persistent threats to defund critical support of the Chesapeake Bay Program, Maryland must defend itself and establish protections for land, air, water, and communities through strong state leadership. Whoever is governor will oversee an administration that will determine our role as citizens of a global community, as well as the future of our citizens' health, safety, and quality of life. The goals we reach in 2025 will be set in motion by the decisions our public servants make in the upcoming legislative session. How will we, as a state, position ourselves in an increasingly unstable climate—both political and environmental? Will we shrink from our responsibilities or affirm a posture of bold leadership, challenging other states to follow our example? This guide is meant to lay out the issues that

are on the table in 2018, in a context of what we might achieve in the not-so-distant future with the right visionary leadership.

Our goal through this issue guide is to help arm you with the information you need to ask questions of your candidates when they knock on your door or appear at your community center, so you get them to share their views on the important conservation issues facing our state.

While this guide is produced by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters Education Fund, the information presented has been gathered from our organizational partners, and subject matter experts from around the state. We are grateful for their assistance in creating these policy briefs on critical environmental issues.

This issue guide offers one vision of the future, of what might be achieved by 2025 with your help. But it is only one vision. We look forward to continuing to work with you to shape our collective vision of Maryland's future, as new challenges and new opportunities arise in the years to come.



Karla Raettig
Executive Director



Chuck Porcari
Maryland LCV Ed Fund Board Chair



Vision 2025

- **Setting the stage for 100% clean energy**
 - Making Maryland a leader in clean, renewable energy
 - Ensuring the completion of the first large-scale Off-shore Wind farm on the East Coast
 - Building a clean energy workforce
 - Moving towards a clean transportation system, including improved public transit and electric vehicle infrastructure

- **Aggressive enforcement of environmental regulations through professionally led, well-staffed, appropriately funded state agencies.**
 - Restored funding to enforcement agencies
 - Improved metrics on enforcement outcomes
 - Reduced recidivism of pollution violators
 - Renewed emphasis on protection of sensitive species, including oysters
- **An educated, energized, engaged electorate, reflecting the diversity of Maryland's population**
 - Public financing of elections
 - Improved voter access
 - Strengthened voter education



- **Fishable, swimmable, drinkable state waters, and a healthier Bay Watershed**
 - Improved bay ecosystem, including oyster sanctuaries and marine life
 - Smarter development policies that protect forests and open space
 - Reduced run-off from septic systems and agriculture
 - Conowingo Dam solution involving a federal and multi-state partnership
 - Accelerated progress in meeting targets to protect the health of the Chesapeake Bay
- **Improved health outcomes in all communities through reduced environmental degradation**
 - Improved health in communities of color
 - Cleaner communities with reduced trash
 - Higher quality of life through sustainable development



Confronting Climate Change

Background

Climate change poses an existential threat to our environment, public health, and the economy. With more than 3,000 miles of coastline,¹ and approximately 265,000 acres less than 5 feet above sea level,² Maryland's coastal communities are among the most vulnerable in the country to the effects of sea level rise. By 2050, experts predict that average sea-level could rise as much as 2 feet, with 5 feet by the end of the century. Coastal communities already experience increases in "nuisance flooding," which in neighborhoods closest to the water come with an almost predictable regularity. Baltimore City and Annapolis have some of the worst nuisance flooding in the country.³ Increasing global temperatures exacerbates our state's poor air quality, which is among the worst on the East Coast, and increasingly intense weather events affect Marylanders regardless of geography.

The same geography that makes us vulnerable to climate change gives us a unique opportunity to be part of the solution to it. Our coastline, which is a source of pride for Marylanders across the state, also holds the potential to be an economic driver for clean energy. The development of offshore wind for Maryland presents an amazing opportunity for the state to generate more clean energy and serve as the economic driver of the region if we invest in the industry enough to attract more developers and manufacturers. Meanwhile our solar industry has seen significant growth, but must continue to be supported and nurtured. Finding the balance between renewable energy expansion and the protection of agricultural land and greenspace; between traditional viewsheds and a new economy will be a challenge in the next term, as our state confronts concerns of sea level rise and the effects of climate change.

Clean Energy for All

Maryland has begun a process to limit its greenhouse gas emissions. In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly reauthorized and extended the original 2009 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Act, which requires a climate action plan in 2019 specifying programs and actions to reduce Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions by 40% (below the 2006 level) by 2030. While this is a significant step, our ultimate objective must be to reach 100% clean energy in a just and equitable way as quickly as possible with a near-complete elimination of greenhouse gas emissions. To reach these benchmarks, whoever is Governor will need to be aggressive about building on regional efforts to improve efficiency, grow clean energy capacity, and incentivize reduced dependence on fossil fuels. There will be difficult decisions about which industries to prioritize, tremendous opportunity for creative investment in new technologies, and increased need for diligence with respect to enforcement of emissions regulations. Through all of that need to grow the clean energy economy, we must ensure that the movement is just and equitable. Maryland needs to be on the forefront of the clean energy for all movement by ensuring the opportunities and benefits of the transition are directed to overburdened and underserved communities. We need to ensure that communities most impacted by pollution are consulted and invested in with clean technology solutions, and we must be sure that communities traditionally reliant on old, polluting technologies are supported and protected as our economy shifts.

REGIONAL COOPERATION

While Maryland and other individual states can take steps on their own to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gasses, there are multiplying benefits to regional cooperation.

The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) was designed as a collective effort by nine northeast and mid-Atlantic states – including Maryland - to reduce CO2 emissions generated by fossil fuel power plants while maintaining reliable electricity service. Proceeds from the sale of a limited number of emissions allowances fund state and local programs that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy. The success of this "cap-and-invest" program in Maryland since 2007 is indisputable, with hundreds of thousands of dollars invested in improving efficiency and reducing energy costs in low-income communities and moving the state towards its goal of greenhouse gas reduction. In fact, RGGI states have experienced better economic growth and faster pollution reduction rates than states not participating in the program.

A similar model is used in a proposal to build a regional system of "carbon pricing." The Regional Carbon Cost Collection Initiative (RCCCI) would limit greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels in the residential, commercial, industrial, electricity, and transportation sectors, which together account for 89% of Maryland's greenhouse gas emissions.



The details of how to structure a cost-collection system, and how the funds would be spent will need to be worked out in the next term to set Maryland on a path to its greenhouse gas reduction goals, and it will be incumbent upon whoever is the Governor in 2019 to lead the way towards building a regional system with collective benefits.

Similar “polluters pay” programs have been proposed in Maryland and deserve strong consideration in the coming years. Some states that have partnered on RGGI for close to a decade are discussing how a “cap-and-invest” model can be used in the transportation sector. Transportation is now the largest source of climate pollution in the country, and here in Maryland it is essentially tied with power plants when it comes to dangerous climate pollution. Maryland should work with its partner states in the region to determine the best path to develop and launch a successful RGGI-like program for limiting pollution from motor fuels and investing in clean, equitable transportation solutions that communities want, get people to economic opportunity, and result in even less pollution.

RENEWABLE PORTFOLIO STANDARD

In 2016, the Maryland General Assembly passed legislation mandating that 25% of Maryland’s energy be derived from renewable sources by the year 2020 through the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS). In the final year of this term, the General Assembly failed to act to further expand the RPS and continue the drive towards moving our state entirely off its reliance on fossil fuels for its energy. Moving forward, Maryland will either stagnate at a level of 25% renewable energy, or advance as a leader in renewable energy, and take advantage of the benefits of the clean energy economy.

The question is not simply one of the sources of energy: decisions around the RPS also expose issues of economic and health disparities, and what sources of energy count to our renewable energy goals. Raising the RPS to 50% by the year 2030 could bring as many as 20,000 jobs in the solar industry alone, but it will be



incumbent upon our leaders to ensure that these jobs are available to those living in the most vulnerable communities, through providing opportunities for workforce development and job training to underrepresented populations. Achieving this goal will be a significant step forward towards the more comprehensive goal of “Clean Energy for All,” a national campaign by the Conservation Voter Movement, to reach 100% clean energy by the year 2050—an objective that capitalizes on the rapid growth of wind and solar industries as well as a mandate to reduce pollution and adverse health impacts in our communities.

As we expand the infrastructure of clean energy technologies such as solar and wind (both on and off-shore), we will need to look at the sources of renewable energy that are not necessarily clean: waste-to-energy incineration and biomass incineration each have significant and negative environmental impacts. Transitioning the jobs at those facilities to

clean-energy industries will be a challenge during the next term.

OFFSHORE WIND

The wind blowing off the Atlantic coast is a tremendous and untapped clean energy source that will build a modern, renewable energy economy with thousands of skilled, family-supporting jobs. In approving the first two offshore wind projects in the Maryland offshore wind energy areas, the Public Service Commission (PSC) analysis stated that “both proposed [Off Shore Wind] projects would produce positive net economic, environmental, and health benefits to the State.”⁴ The two projects would bring in hundreds of millions of dollars of in-state expenditures and nearly 10,000 new full-time in-state jobs. In addition, offshore wind will stabilize electric rates throughout the state. Diversifying the East Coast’s energy mix is critical for



protecting ratepayers from price spikes in the volatile fossil fuel markets. There is no fuel cost for offshore wind, so offshore wind will lock in stable electric rates for 20+ years. The PSC's independent analyst said, "Maryland ratepayers would benefit from reduced energy and capacity prices, as well as reduced transmission congestion costs." Despite all of these benefits, opposition remains and the administration will be held to keep the projects on track, so that Maryland can receive all the benefits of wind power, including those that come with "first mover" status, as the first state on the East Coast to embrace such a large scale project.

CLEAN BUSES—HEALTHY NIÑOS

In 2015 Volkswagen was exposed for cheating federal emissions tests, which allowed almost half a million diesel vehicles to spew higher levels of pollutants into the air. Maryland is set to receive nearly \$72 million from the court-mandated settlement fund dedicated to investment in zero-emissions vehicles and infrastructure. Maryland LCV Ed Fund and its Latinx outreach program, Chispa Maryland, join with its sister organizations around the country to demand that these funds be put towards communities and school districts, especially low-income and communities of color, where students and families are most at risk of breathing dirty air, and

disproportionately carry the burden of pollution. Replacing dirty diesel school buses with clean electric buses will protect our most vulnerable populations. The VW settlement money will be an important first step towards this ultimate goal of reducing pollution challenges facing our children. However, the Governor and General Assembly will need to explore other solutions to reduce air pollution sources that result in disproportionate negative health impacts in low income communities and communities of color.

FOSSIL FUEL INFRASTRUCTURE

Maryland continues to have some of the highest smog levels in the Eastern United States, with five million residents living in areas that have been designated as having unhealthy levels of smog. (The total population of Maryland is estimated at just over six million). Although Maryland is by many estimates, the wealthiest state in the nation, Maryland's power plant emissions control technologically lags behind even traditional coal states such as West Virginia, Alabama, and Kentucky—some of the poorest states in the nation.⁵

COAL PLANTS Maryland remains addicted to coal. Our state is still home to seven large coal plants, the majority of which are over 50 years old. Several lack modern controls for harmful air pollutants and many are operating with expired clean water permits. Plus, Maryland's coal plants are truly massive contributors

of climate-disrupting pollution in the state—coal plants alone accounted for nearly 20% of the state's climate pollution in 2014. Coal power plants release smog-forming nitrogen oxides (NOx) and sulfur dioxide (SO₂), which contribute significantly to respiratory illness, as well as cancer, stroke and heart disease. Poor air quality affects everyone, however studies show that communities of color tend to be more likely in counties with higher concentrations of particulate matter and smog pollution. This tracks with Maryland statistics, where Baltimore City has the highest rates of childhood and adult asthma in the state. The administration will need to move Maryland away from these dirty energy sources of electricity and assure a just transition to new industries for the workers and communities who have traditionally relied on the jobs they provide.

GAS PIPELINES In 2017, Maryland banned fracking because of the environmental and public health risks. At the same time, recent court rulings have shown that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has failed to properly evaluate the net environmental impact of some gas infrastructure projects. Hazardous transport of fossil fuels through Maryland, including trains carrying crude oil and pipelines carrying fracked gas pose risks to Marylanders throughout the state from threats of derailments, spills, and explosions. As an example, the Potomac Pipeline would carry fracked gas from Pennsylvania, through Maryland, and into Virginia—running through sensitive "karst" geology that is characterized by underground drainage systems with sinkholes and caves that make it easily susceptible to the transmission of pollutants through connected underground aquifers. This project and others like it pose a threat to the health and drinking water of millions of residents throughout the region. Efforts persist to try to amend the process for proposed pipelines that would drill through or construct on sensitive geology. With pipelines proposed across the state the issue will persist into the 2019 General Assembly and will be a continuing issue for whoever serves as Governor.

CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE VOTER QUESTIONS

What's your view on expanding renewable energy infrastructure, including an expansion of the Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard, and storage technology?

Should Maryland take steps to cap and reduce climate pollution from the transportation sector? If so, what specific policies and programs? What are your views on investment in alternatives like electric school buses, mass transit, and bike- and pedestrian-friendly communities?

What would be your priorities as Governor for putting Maryland on a well-defined path to reduce greenhouse gases? Is there a particular percentage reduction you believe is appropriate?

Should Maryland transition away from using coal to generate electricity? If so, what's your plan for retraining coal plant workers and protecting local communities?

How would you work to ensure that gas and crude-oil transportation follow strict environmental and safety standards? What's your view on new or expanded transport activity?

What's your view on siting solar and wind facilities? How do we balance that with protecting valuable land resources?

What mitigation measures should Maryland take to increase support for vulnerable communities affected by climate change?

Healthy Communities

Background

Maryland is sustained by healthy communities and a cherished natural environment, both of which can be reinforced by development practices that ensure vibrant cities and towns that support small businesses and are great places to live for people of all ages and incomes. By growing smartly, Maryland can enjoy a resilient, diverse, and sustainable economy that uses tax dollars efficiently and supports robust job growth.

These efforts must be balanced against an equal need to support the state's rural lands and ensure that they remain able to support wildlife habitats, recreation, and farms that feed the region and our state's rural heritage. More land has been developed in Maryland during the past 30 years than in the previous 300. Our historic towns and cities struggle, while forests and farmlands are lost to new, car-dependent developments. These developments demand increased infrastructure of roads and highways, with ever increasing traffic congestion, air pollution, and stormwater run-off, even as they contribute to the loss of forests that are critical to protecting our water supply and sequestering the carbon polluting our air. If current trends continue, more than 400,000 acres of forest and farm will be lost in the next 30 years. Pressures for deforestation and development of agricultural land will become even more challenging as we move to a clean-energy economy centered around development of a solar industry. The same lands that are most valuable for agriculture provide the most tempting opportunities to harvest the sun for energy; where open space is not available, previously undeveloped stands of forest can become subject to the solar developer's advances. We must expand solar energy for our climate future, while protecting the open spaces—both agricultural and public lands—and forests that support our healthy quality of life. Maryland needs

elected officials to create a vision and plan for this question.

At the same time, we must look at ensuring that our communities are healthy, regardless of zip code. We know that a person's race, economic status, educational attainment, and residence influence health outcomes as much as their access to health care services, genetics, or behavior choices. In April of 2014, Maryland research teams documented double disparities: where people of color and low-income communities were both medically underserved and more likely to host a polluting facility. Maryland's air quality is one of the worst on the East Coast, with more 5 million people living in sub-standard air-quality conditions (Maryland's overall population is only 6 million). As a result, Maryland has disproportionately high instances of asthma. 16.4% of children in Maryland have been diagnosed with asthma, compared with 12.4% in the rest of the US. Our state must confront this record and change how we permit sources of pollution to ensure that no community is saddled with an unfair burden.

Cumulative Impact

Health disparities among different communities in Maryland are exacerbated by environmental pollution. Polluting industries often are clustered in and around communities of color and/or low income communities, but current permitting processes only take into consideration the pollution coming from each source independent of the total amount of pollution affecting that community. Many of Maryland's older urban neighborhoods host polluting legacy industries, toxic brownfields, polluted runoff from large expanses of pavement, and a lack of green space. Such communities deserve additional consideration when new polluting facilities are permitted nearby.

Forest Conservation Act

Forests play a critical role in providing wildlife habitat, holding soil, and filtering pollution out of water. Their health and quantity is critical for healthy, clean streams and rivers in Maryland, and contributes significantly to the benefits to communities. The Forest Conservation Act (FCA) was enacted in 1991 in response to alarming rates of deforestation across the state. Despite the act, Maryland has lost at least 17,000 acres of forests in the past nine years to subdivisions, shopping centers, and other development, including some of the state's best and most important forests. While the program had a positive impact on forests, it has not stopped the loss of forested land in Maryland. A 2012 report from the Department of Natural Resources to the General Assembly states that approximately 7000 acres are lost in our state each year despite state goals for "no net loss." With the loss of forest, water pollution from run-off increases, requiring expensive mitigation efforts to protect the waterways, including drinking water reservoirs. Forests are among the best means to sequester carbon that contributes to climate change, which they do while adding clean oxygen to our air. The Forest Conservation Act has not been updated since 1991.

Open Space and Older Communities

Conserving open space and natural resources requires efforts to re-invest in older communities which were often designed to be inherently more sustainable. Maryland has incentive programs that support both of these goals, and both will need to be protected and expanded in the years to come as we plan for better growth and healthy communities. Program Open Space has preserved more than 1.6 million acres of land across the state for parks, recreation, farming, forests, and historic areas from a dedicated 0.5% Real Estate Transfer Tax. This program is unique among Bay states and

puts Maryland at the forefront of land preservation efforts nationwide. Nevertheless, over the decades Governors from both parties have "borrowed" from the fund to balance state budgets. Over the next several years, millions of dollars are set to be repaid into the fund. However, keeping the promise will be a challenge as demands for increased funding for other programs threaten to pull the administration away from prioritizing public lands over other potentially worthy objectives. The Heritage Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit supports adaptive reuse of existing and historic projects that revitalize older communities and incentivize revitalization of existing communities over continuing patterns of ruinous sprawl that threaten our open space and natural resources. Despite the profound value of the credit, funding for this appropriated program has fallen by nearly 90% since its creation in 1997. Today, the state provides just \$9 million annually for the program, which pales in comparison to the \$100 million Virginia annually invests in its own state historic tax credit program. To compete regionally, and keep Maryland from sprawling, whoever is Governor must invest in programs like the State Historic Tax Credit and Program Open Space, which have been proven to make the state stronger.

Public Transit and Transportation Funding

Transportation reforms are increasingly recognized as a key to reducing climate pollution and cleaning up our air

and water. With more than 60% of the population living in the five contiguous counties between the two beltways,⁶ there is a pressing need to increase public transportation to relieve traffic congestion, reduce air pollution from automobiles, and reach our goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Traditionally, the state has invested the majority of its transportation dollars in infrastructure for automobiles, which significantly contribute to air pollution; nitrogen pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, our rivers, and lakes; and global warming. Many Marylanders lack transportation options. In addition, most large highway projects bring a very high price tag for the environment and taxpayers. Significant funds spent on highways, intersections, and new miles of wider roads means that little funding is left for projects that expand public transportation and support pedestrians and cyclists—projects that reduce driving distances, as well as air and water pollution. In order to support healthy communities, our elected officials must shift priorities away from new highway construction and into public transit programs and walkable-bikeable communities that provide safe access to jobs, health care, shops, and schools for all residents, regardless of community size or zip code.

Food Deserts

Access to healthy foods and fresh produce is foundational to healthy communities. Food deserts, defined as areas that lack access to fresh fruit, vegetables, and other healthful whole foods, are disproportionately found in low-income communities and communities of color. Importantly, while food deserts are generally associated with urban areas, lack of access to food is also a concern in more rural areas where communities in even heavily agricultural areas are considered to be living in a USDA food desert. Even where there is ready access to healthy food, cost of food can become a barrier to healthy communities.⁷ In addition to the link between healthy residents and healthy communities, food deserts present an environmental challenge.



Where access to affordable, healthy food is limited, residents are faced with the choice between traveling distances to shop for groceries—increasing traffic congestion—or purchasing their food from convenience stores, which sell pre-packaged food, generally in disposable containers, which increases trash. Additionally, these pre-packaged items are often highly processed, sometimes including toxics and non-therapeutic antibiotics, and have a larger carbon footprint than fresh foods.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES VOTER QUESTIONS

What are your positions on weighing collective sources of pollution when issuing permits?

How do you plan to prioritize clean energy efficiency programs, especially in overburdened and underserved communities, when using the Strategic Energy Investment Fund?

What are your priorities with regards to Program Open Space and other land conservation programs including the schedule for paying back funds previously borrowed from the program?

What will you do to protect all Marylanders, and especially vulnerable populations, from toxic chemicals in personal care and cleaning products, artificial turf, industrial uses, and buildings?

What will you do to encourage and support public transportation?

Do you think the government should take action (funding; administrative initiatives; proposed legislation) to support significant expansion of electric vehicle use (personal vehicles, buses for public transportation and schools, and commercial vehicles), to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and other harmful air pollutants? If so, what should the government do? If not, why not?

Strong Regulations

Background

More than 45,000 people work in Maryland State Government, in one of the dozens of state agencies that ensure the health, safety, and legal protections of Marylanders in all 23 counties plus Baltimore City. We rely on the agencies of the Departments of Environment, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Planning to enforce regulations set by statute or by executive order to protect all aspects of our environment. The leadership of these agencies, as well as adequate staffing and support, plays as important a role in the direction our state takes in environmental stewardship as any decision that comes from the Governor. Sound environmental policy requires adequate funding and strategic use of available funds despite fiscal challenges. This is especially true in a climate where federal agencies abdicate their responsibilities to protect our air, water, public lands, and health to actively slash existing safeguards.

Budget priorities

Every administration for a generation has promoted the importance of the Chesapeake Bay as our most significant natural treasure, and yet, between 2000 and 2016 the Water Management Administration within the Department of the Environment lost more than $\frac{1}{3}$ of its overall inspection staff. Analysis by the non-partisan Department of Legislative Services has expressed concern with “chronically understaffed” executive agencies. Indeed, the MDE general fund budget has shrunk significantly between 2006 and 2016—in absolute terms as well as inflation-adjusted terms—even as the total state general fund budget has increased by 30%. These trends are mirrored in other enforcement agencies, including Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture.

Marylanders rely on these enforcement agencies to protect our public health as well as our environment.

Enforcement staff are the last line of defense to protect all of us—especially the most vulnerable communities—from toxins and carcinogens. Without sufficient staff and funding support, we are left exposed to the effects of shortcuts taken by bad actors who take advantage of the situation to pollute our air and water. Water testing, air quality testing and soil testing are among the most significant tools we have to ensure that we are safe: that the water we drink is free of hazardous chemicals; that the air we breathe is healthy; that the soil where we grow our food is not toxic. Although there are limitless demands on the state budget, and limited funds, it will be essential that the administration protect the budget, the resources, and the jobs of the hardworking departments that serve only to protect us.

STRONG REGULATIONS VOTER QUESTIONS

To what extent will you prioritize restoring agency enforcement budgets to ensure compliance with environmental laws and regulations?

How will you ensure that Maryland’s citizens, and our air, water, and land, will continue to have the strongest protections without a federal backstop?

What changes would you make to Maryland budget and revenue streams to resolve our structural budget deficit and ensure dedicated funding for environmental programs even in fiscally tight budget years?

Clean Water

Background

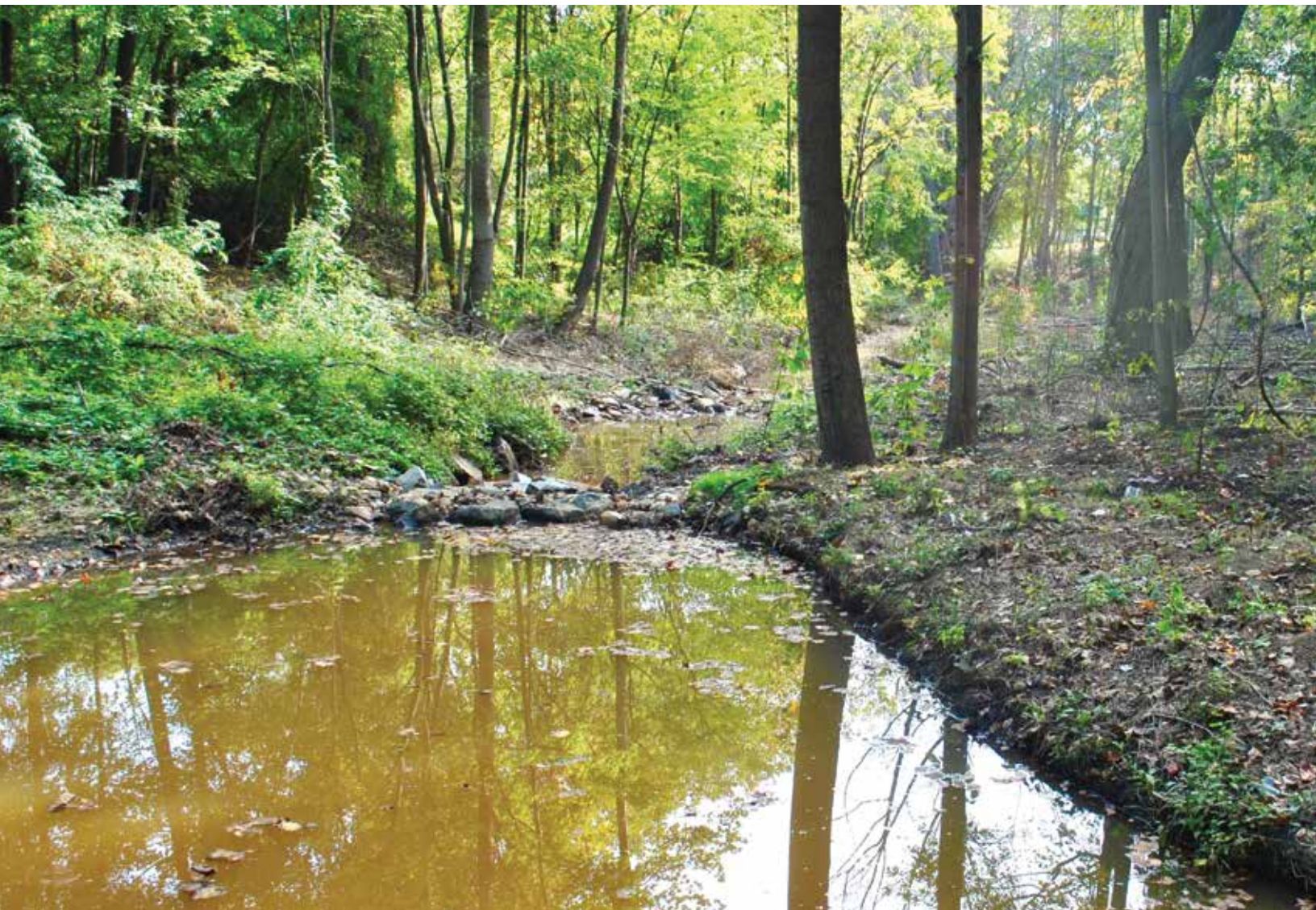
How can Maryland achieve the goal of fishable and swimmable waters in our local rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay? Maryland, with the other Bay watershed states, has a clean-water plan that will help us reach this goal. The implementation of this plan, however, will require dedicated attention by every level of government, and significant political will to make hard decisions. In recent years, the health of the Chesapeake Bay has improved, but on our current path

we will not meet the 2025 clean-up benchmarks. In order to accelerate our progress to meet our targets, government at every level will need to cooperatively address pollution from agriculture, urban and suburban stormwater and rural septic system run-off to all of our state's waterways: lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams and the Chesapeake Bay.

Sustainable Agriculture

Agriculture represents a significant segment of the Maryland economy, with a \$2.5 billion economic investment from

more than 2 million acres of land in agriculture. The Eastern Shore, especially, cherishes its agricultural traditions surrounding the poultry industry that ranks seventh nationally in broiler chickens. The expansion of poultry houses leads to increased amounts of poultry litter, which can be used for fertilizer in nutrient-starved soils—but when used in excess causes run-off of nutrients that leads to the destruction of healthy marine ecosystems. A 2015 Phosphorous Management Tool (PMT), giving farmers the support and flexibility to manage waste on





their property and guidelines towards implementing changes, has been called the biggest opportunity to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and local waters in more than 30 years, but challenges persist. Whoever is Governor will need to be persistent in ensuring the full implementation of the PMT, and finding solutions to funding, program transparency, and questions of where to dispose of chicken manure.

While the poultry industry dominates discussions of Maryland agriculture, it is only one piece of a tapestry of the industry. Crop farming holds an almost comparable place in the total value of agricultural products, and presents its own opportunities and challenges, especially related to soil health and pesticide use. Protecting Maryland's citizens from exposure to toxic substances is made more urgent by the failure of federal laws

designed to address toxics, including pesticides, and the inability of Congress to enact reforms of the failed and outdated laws. This is especially true given the significant abdication of enforcement responsibility on the federal level by the EPA. A growing body of science shows that while healthy soils can provide important carbon sequestration and contribute to the efforts to reduce climate change, these benefits are reduced when they are treated with pesticides. Incentivizing bio-rational pest management that reduce the need for chemical pesticides will require initiatives of county and state governments.

Oysters and aquaculture

While Maryland is possibly most famously associated with blue crabs, the culture of oyster harvesting has deep

roots in the state's traditions. The health of the oyster population is also closely associated with the health of the Chesapeake Bay as a whole, both thanks to the ability of oysters to filter water and contribute to the clarity and cleanliness of the Bay waters, but also due to the fragility of their population. Balancing the needs of the watermen to harvest and sell oysters with the need to protect and grow the overall oyster population has been at the heart of recent legislation. The next several years will likely see important legislation relating to aquaculture, and oyster management. A stock assessment report mandated by 2016 legislation will be released in December, 2018, and provide the Department of Natural Resources with the information

necessary to develop a science-based management plan for oysters. They are required to design a management plan to achieve those population targets, which will raise questions related to use of alternate substrates (granite, crushed concrete, and reef balls, etc., which are used to supplement natural oyster reefs to enhance restoration efforts), dredging of fossil oyster shells from Man O' War Shoals—the last remaining natural oyster reef in Maryland—and sustainable levels of fishing effort.

Conowingo Dam

The Conowingo Dam, owned and operated by Exelon, traps a high percentage of sediment and phosphorus, preventing these pollutants from reaching the Bay. However, the Dam is reaching its capacity for trapping pollutants, and severe storm events trigger flooding of sediments into the Bay. Exelon, which has owned and operated the dam since 1980, is seeking to extend its license by 46 years, which requires reviews and water quality certification and the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement. Whoever is Governor will need to proactively work with Exelon to address sediment and nutrient build-up behind the dam, and towards mitigation of down-stream water quality.

Septic Systems and Development

Pollution from septic systems drains into our ground and surface water, leading to environmental degradation and dirty drinking water from excess nitrogen and bacteria. Conventional septic systems do not prevent nitrogen from entering groundwater. Currently, septic systems and wells are only inspected at the point of a home sale, allowing systems to fail and/or pollute drinking water for years. In 2012 the General Assembly passed comprehensive septic legislation that required any new or replacement septic system in the state's designated "Critical Area" within 1,000 feet of tidal water to use the Best Available Technology for treatment to protect Maryland's most

fragile ecosystems. In 2012, the Maryland Department of the Environment expanded that regulation to include all new septic systems statewide, in order to protect the entire watershed and the health of Marylanders in every jurisdiction equally. Those expanded protections were reversed in 2016 to require BAT only in the Critical Areas (immediately surrounding the Bay tidal areas). This decision sparked new discussions concerning what regulations are necessary to protect our watershed, how aggressively development should be managed on septic systems, and where BAT system requirements need to be enforced. These conversations and decisions will extend into the next term.

Expanded Polystyrene Foam Ban/Single-Use Plastics

More than two-thirds of trash placed in our waste system is recyclable, and the overall amount of trash could be reduced through better practices and policy. For example, 4.8 billion beverages in single-use containers are sold in Maryland every year, but only about one-fourth are recycled, and plastic beverage containers make up about half of the trash collected from Maryland waterways during community clean-ups. In 2015, Maryland led the way in the banning of microbeads from beauty products—a product that contaminated waterways and created a health risk to fish and other marine organisms. The Maryland General Assembly has the opportunity to ban expanded polystyrene foam food service products, which present similar risks to marine ecology as microbeads, but which are even more dangerous both to Maryland's waterways and the health of Marylanders everywhere, especially the most vulnerable populations. Despite bans existing in Montgomery County, Prince George's County, and now Baltimore City, this effort has failed two years in a row. Prior to this, there were several years of equally unsuccessful attempts to ban or put a fee on single use plastic bags, and to institute a bottle redemption program for plastic and aluminum cans,

all of which also constitute completely avoidable levels of contamination of our waterways and a waste of valuable resources. While these efforts have been unsuccessful over the past two terms, the imperative to address issues of waste and single-use plastic will only grow in the next legislative term and it will be important for our leaders to take bold actions in this arena.

CLEAN WATER VOTER QUESTIONS

What would you do to protect our clean water from chicken waste—especially from the excess nutrients that feed destructive algae when farms spread the waste on their fields as fertilizer?

What programs will you support to reduce trash, both in our landfills and our waterways?

How do you plan to address issues of septic system runoff into our waterways?

Are additional legislation or regulations needed to protect air and water quality in the communities and waterways affected by large, industrial-size poultry operations? If so, what would you support? If not, why not?

How do you plan to address pollution from the Conowingo Dam, including measures to mitigate damage from "scouring" during major rain events?

What programs do you support to help conventional farmers transition to more sustainable practices?

What criteria would you use when evaluating potential regulations or restrictions on pesticides, either for agricultural or residential use?

Energized Voters

Background

Democracy—and voter access—are environmental concerns, since without a strong democracy nothing else can be accomplished. Our democracy is based on the premise that every individual, regardless of how wealthy they are, has an equal voice. When our legislatures accurately reflect the demographic diversity of our state's population, our democracy, and our government, is stronger.

Public financing

In 2014, Montgomery County became the first county in the state to establish a small donor matching program for county council and executive elections. It incentivizes small contributions by providing matching funds to candidates who don't accept any large contributions or contributions from special interests such as corporations or PACs. In

2017, Howard County followed suit to establish a similar small donor program for county-level candidates to utilize in the 2022 election. Similar programs existing around the country show that in jurisdictions where public financing is available, it has successfully put campaigns back into the hands of citizens, rather than large-dollar donors. In New York City, 92% of primary candidates use their program. These programs have shown to open up elections to non-traditional candidates, with increased numbers of women, people of color, and people from lower-income communities appearing on the ballot. Maryland has a public financing program for Gubernatorial candidates (Governor Hogan won in 2014 using public financing) however candidates for the General Assembly and in most counties have no such opportunities. With 70% of Maryland voters in favor of passing campaign finance reform laws

that would provide limited amount of funding to qualified candidates in return for a commitment to limit campaign spending and reject large contributions, the time could be right for public financing efforts for state office.

ENERGIZED VOTERS VOTER QUESTIONS

What steps, if any, would you take to increase transparency and openness in government?

What are your positions on the existing Fair Campaign Finance Fund and on proposals to replace it with a modern public financing program available to all state candidates (legislative and statewide), funded by a mix of dedicated funds and general fund support?



Educated Voters

Who Is Eligible to Register?

To register to vote, you must be:

- A U.S. Citizen
- A Maryland resident and
- At least 16 years old (if you will be at least 18 years old by the next general election).

You cannot have been:

- Convicted of buying or selling votes
- Under guardianship for mental disability and found by a court to be unable to communicate a desire to vote
- Convicted of a felony and *currently* serving a court-ordered sentence of imprisonment. Those convicted of a felony and released on parole are eligible to register to vote, and to vote.

How to Register?

Residents of Maryland can register to vote using Maryland's Online Voter Registration System

<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration>

or by visiting one of the following locations:

- Your local board of elections;
- The State Board of Elections;
- The Department of Health and Mental Hygiene;
- The Department of Social Services;
- The Motor Vehicle Administration (MVA);
- Offices on Aging;
- The MTA Paratransit Certification Office;
- All public institutions of higher education;
- Recruitment offices of the U.S. Armed Forces;
- Marriage license offices; and
- Offices for students with disabilities at all Maryland colleges and universities.

You have the option to register with any of Maryland's recognized political parties. If you choose not to register with a party, you will be registered as "unaffiliated." Maryland has "closed" primaries, which means that you may only vote in the primary for your registered party. If you are registered as unaffiliated, you will not be able to vote in any primary elections, but will be able to vote in general elections, and any nonpartisan primary election held in your jurisdiction.



Recognized political parties in Maryland include:

- Democratic Party
- Republican Party
- Libertarian Party
- Green Party

Where to Vote

Maryland's Board of Elections can provide you with your polling place on their website:

<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/PollingPlaceSearch>

Maryland has a robust early voting program, which allows you to vote in any one of the early-voting locations in your county.

You may also vote absentee by requesting an absentee ballot. Absentee ballots **MUST** be received by the Board of Election by the election date (both primary and general elections) You can request an absentee ballot here:

<https://voterservices.elections.maryland.gov/OnlineVoterRegistration>

Important Dates

Primary Election Close of Registration: June 5, 2018

Primary Election Early Voting: June 14–21, 2018

Primary Election Date: June 26, 2018

General Election Close of Registration:
October 16, 2018

General Election Early Voting:
October 25–November 1, 2018

General Election: November 6, 2018



Notes

1. <https://coast.noaa.gov/data/docs/states/shorelines.pdf>
2. <http://sealevel.climatecentral.org/uploads/ssrf/MD-Report.pdf>
3. http://www.noaanews.noaa.gov/stories2014/20140728_nuisanceflooding.html
4. http://www.marylandoffshorewind.com/Documents/MDOSW_Staff_Recommendations.pdf
5. <http://www.rogermanno.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Governor-Hogan-Control-of-NOx-Emissions-COMAR-26-11-38-01-05-5-1-2015.pdf>
6. http://www.maryland-demographics.com/counties_by_population
7. <http://mdfoodsystemmap.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/All-County-Profiles.pdf>

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MARYLAND LEAGUE
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EDUCATION FUND

30C West Street
Annapolis MD 21401
410-280-9855
www.marylandconservation.org

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“The Maryland League of Conservation Voters Education Fund (LCV) is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit committed to building the effectiveness of the environmental community since 2000. We are dedicated to maximizing the participation of conservation-minded voters in public policy decisions made at the state and local levels regarding Maryland’s environment and natural resources. Our programs strengthen and build the power of the environmental community, and they expand, deepen, and activate a base of conservation-minded voters around the state.”

