

## Families, scientists, legislators, riverkeepers, advocates rally for clean water

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**(ANNAPOLIS, MD)**-More than 200 legislators, scientists, environmental advocates and families rallied for clean water today in support of legislation to reduce pollution from poultry manure (SB 257 and HB 381) and to block a repeal of the 2012 stormwater management law. Runoff from poultry manure and stormwater contaminates Maryland local creeks, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay, is a danger to public health and is where the largest pollution reductions are needed under federal clean water mandates.

If passed, SB 257 - heard in committee today -- and HB 381 - which will be heard in committee tomorrow -- will put into statute what the state has been working on through regulations for four years. Maryland committed to implementing the Phosphorus Management Tool in 2011, but it has been proposed - and withdrawn - three times due to pressure from powerful special interest groups - most recently when Governor Larry Hogan withdrew regulations on his Inauguration Day.

"These phosphorus pollution reduction bills reflect years of negotiation and compromise between scientists and the agricultural community working together to find a solution that experts are calling the greatest opportunity in 30 years to clean up our waters," said Karla Raettig, co-chair of the Maryland Clean Agriculture Coalition. "There can be no further weakening or delays of this long overdue action step to reduce manure pollution."

Numerous studies show that phosphorus pollution from manure is getting worse, not better in the Chesapeake Bay and Maryland rivers. If this continues, we will jeopardize the progress we've made to reduce pollution over the past several decades. U.S. Geological Survey water quality monitoring data [shows](#) that in the past decade levels of pollution that were declining have either leveled off or actually begun to go back up. In some rivers, USGS scientists say phosphorus pollution is worsening in places due to runoff from farm fields.

Investing in clean water through stormwater management and reducing manure pays off for Maryland. A recent Chesapeake Bay Foundation study found that fully implementing the plan to finish the job of cleaning the Chesapeake Bay will produce \$129.7 billion a year in economic benefits.

"Maryland has come too far to backtrack now. The state has improved sewage and industrial discharges. That's good. But science says we also need to reduce polluted runoff from farm fields and developed lands. Manure, dog waste, chemicals and more are all flushed into our rivers and streams during storms. " said Will Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. " Pollution reduction will pay off. Water once off-limits for swimming will be safe again. Crabs, fish and oysters will be plentiful and safe to eat. Watermen will go back to work."

Maryland families will be safer and truly able to enjoy Maryland waterways with less threat of algae blooms and other public health concerns associated with runoff pollution, said Brent Bolin, Clean Water Coalition Director at the Maryland League of Conservation Voters. In addition, Maryland will only be able to meet its federally mandated cleanup goals of reducing runoff and phosphorus pollution by implementing manure reduction rules and supporting stormwater management programs.

"Maryland is making great strides toward cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay," Bolin said. "But for the health of our waterways, our families and our economy, we must do more."

Speakers at the rally included Will Baker, President, CBF; Jeff Horstman, of the Midshore Riverkeeper Conservancy on behalf of the Maryland Clean Agriculture Coalition; Senator Paul Pinsky, sponsor SB 257; Delegate Stephen Lafferty, sponsor HB 381; Brent Bolin, on behalf of the Clean Water, Healthy Families Coalition; Adam Ortiz, Director, Prince George's County Department of the Environment; and Devan Ogburn, President of the St. Mary's County Association of Student Councils and the CBF Student Bay Advisory Council.

View the infographic ["How manure is contaminating Maryland waters & the Chesapeake Bay"](#) as well as a [fact sheet](#) for more information about the Phosphorus Management Tool.

Advocates are tweeting about the rally using #CleanWaterRallyMD and about the PMT legislation using #lessmanure

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