

Alan J. McCarthy
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February 13, 2020

Ben Grumbles, Secretary
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21230

Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
580 Taylor Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Susquehanna River Impacts to Cecil County Waterways

Dear Secretaries Grumbles and Haddaway-Riccio:

I am writing in response to a letter I recently received from a lifelong resident of Cecil County who lives on the North East River. His letter accurately details the perniciously negative impacts we experience whenever the floodgates at the Conowingo Dam are opened following a rain event. The letter contained photographs taken as recently as February 4, 2020 that document the accretive effect of the accumulation of flotsam and jetsam on our shorelines that regularly accompany these events. As you can readily see by perusing the photos, there is a distressing amount of trash consisting of plastic bottles, plastic bags as well as other debris like tires.

Additionally, what is not seen in these photos, is the more troubling impact to the Chesapeake Bay from the dissolved nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus that also accompany these rain events. These excess nutrients lead to algae blooms in the summer that lowers the level of dissolved oxygen in the water leading to anoxic conditions that kill aquatic life. Furthermore, the sediment that flows through the dam settles out in the North East, Bohemia and Elk Rivers causing issues with navigation deleteriously effecting our many marinas and water related recreation and tourism.

Ben Grumbles, Secretary – Maryland Department of the Environment
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary – Maryland Department of Natural Resources
February 11, 2020
Page 2 of 2

I am most appreciative of the State of Maryland's recent initiatives to ameliorate these impacts and sincerely hope they will affect a more environmentally friendly and favorable change in behavior from our upstream neighbors. Please know that I stand by ready and willing to assist you in any way that I can so that we can successfully solve this situation and provide relief to our residents and the Bay.

Thank you for your consideration of my comments.

Sincerely,



Dr. Alan J. McCarthy
County Executive

CC: Hon. Lawrence J. Hogan – Governor
Charles MacLeod

Enclosures

Dear Alan:

The 'Attached' picture was taken a few weeks ago at my Cara Cove property. It is representative of situation which persists and which I find particularly distasteful from both an aesthetics and economic standpoint. The upper Bay is a mess, the result of massive runoffs caused by heavy rain events in Maryland, Pennsylvania and New York. As you know the Conowingo Dam serves as not only a power generation entity but also controls the flow of water into the upper Bay. During high water/flow events the Dam is forced to open numerous gates, thus causing a major surge of water laden with pollutants, silt and trash. It also contributes to major beach erosion.

I know the Governor/State of Maryland has recently taken on Exelon and the State of Pennsylvania for relief, but I imagine that this will become a legal battle that will run for years and yield nothing positive. The fact is that my property along with many others, continues to be degraded by the lack of action on the part of our State and the other major players. Hence the value of these Waterfront properties goes down, not up! It would be difficult to convince anyone of the safety and quality of the water when one sees nothing but old tires, and plastics on the Beach not to mention the visible and nonvisible silt/sediment and black sludge that accumulates in the water thus effecting fish and plant life.

I can't imagine that those industries which make their living off of the bay can be pleased with the situation.

A lot of attention has been focused on the consumer regarding bay cleanup. This is justified but I can personally say that I have spent thousands of dollars to make our properties Bay friendly.

Unless strict rules and programs with appropriate funding are put in place, there will be no progress. The issues are Macro in scale. It's time that the State of Maryland,

and perhaps the County, effect financial relief for those waterfront owners who are directly impacted. As you know, I wanted to expand my home at Cara Cove, but just too many hurdles to overcome. The continuing issues with Bay quality provides less incentive to make improvements.

Probably better to make an investment someplace else. The State of Maryland has been on the backs of residential waterfront holders for years. Seems to me that it's time for a financial break or help that will deal with the issues which I have noted and which would then allow for appropriate property valuations.

ps: I know that this is not a new issue and that much has been written on the subject. But the problem is not new and I have serious doubt that anything will be done.



