

THE COMMON GOOD



Richard Lippenholtz

As my second term as Governor nears its end, I've been reflecting on the accomplishments we have made together as one Maryland — to create a smarter, greener, more sustainable future. One of our key efforts in "Governing for Results" is restoring the Bay. Maryland is leading the way in meeting its goal of reaching the Healthier Bay Tipping Point by 2025.

When we began our hard work nearly eight years ago, holding ourselves accountable to deliver results was imperative.

In 2008, we adopted two-year milestones to focus Chesapeake Bay Watershed states on short-term achievable restoration goals. We ensured you, our citizens, were informed of these developments through programs such as *BayStat*, which shows progress on each strategy and its associated goal.

According to our Maryland progress data, we achieved our 2013 pollution reduction milestones for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment. Our Chesapeake and Coastal Bays Trust Fund, which was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 2007, aided these efforts and has directed a total of \$256 million to local governments and organizations for more than 1,000 nonpoint source pollution projects that reduce harmful runoff.

Another part of restoring the Bay is rebuilding our vital aquatic resources such as oysters and crabs, which are both a foundation of a healthy Bay ecosystem and an important economic resource for local communities around the watershed. We have seen significant progress under the *Oyster Restoration and Aquaculture Development Plan*, launched in 2010. Under the Plan, we

have increased Maryland's network of oyster sanctuaries from 9 percent to 24 percent of remaining quality habitat, planted a national record 1.25 billion native spat in Maryland last year, and expanded citizen stewardship efforts through the *Marylanders Grow Oysters* program.

Even our efforts on land support restoring our waters. Through Program Open space and the Rural Legacy program, we have preserved more than 157,000 acres of land since 2007. What's more, we have planted certified crops on more than 410,000 acres this year alone. Through *Marylanders Plant Trees*, we exceeded the three-year statewide goal of planting and registering 100,000 trees.

With *Explore & Restore Your SchoolShed* and the *Partnership for Children in Nature*, our State stands as a national model for expanding environmental learning and opportunities for young people to connect with our natural world. We were the first in the nation to launch an environmental literacy graduation requirement, passing the baton to the next generation of stewards to continue to create a smarter, greener Maryland.

As the 2014 chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council, I had the honor of hosting the signing of the new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement in Annapolis, which includes emerging issues like toxic contamination, climate change and environmental literacy and stewardship. We are united as a region to achieve our two-year milestones and ultimately reach our 2025 restoration goals.

Collaboration is at the heart of all of these efforts, as there are some challenges so large that we must work together — with our partners in federal, State and local governments, citizens and stakeholders — to succeed. It is indeed the essence of *The Common Good*.

Martin O'Malley
Governor