

THE NATURE OF THINGS

It's been said that a person who plants a tree plants a hope. Trees play a huge role in making the Bay healthier and cleaner. And this season's cooler temperatures make for a perfect time to plant larger native species like oaks and maples something we can all do to help restore the Bay.

By their very existence, trees provide a myriad of benefits to Maryland, its citizens and its waterways. They help cool temperatures, reduce greenhouse gases caused by burning fossil fuels, and even cut down on energy costs. They take in nitrogen and phosphorous while filtering dirty stormwater runoff — all major pollutants of the Chesapeake.

And the rewards don't stop there. Trees clean the air we breathe and provide homes for all types of wildlife. They beautify our neighborhoods and highways, increase property values and contribute to safer communities.

Here in Maryland, under the leadership of Governor Martin O'Malley, we have worked hard to earn a reputation as leaders and innovators in forestry practices. We launched *Marylanders Plant Trees* in 2009 with two distinct goals: to have State inmates plant one million trees by 2011, and to inspire citizens to plant 50,000 trees by end of year 2010. The inmates met their goal and citizens were indeed inspired, planting more than 110,000 trees to date toward a new goal of 150,000 trees by January 1, 2015. We set a goal for students as well, who are now planting buffers along streams near their schools through the *Stream Restoration Challenge*.

Last year, the General Assembly passed a no-net-loss of forest law — the first-of-its-kind legislation in the country. It commits

us to take steps to assure we maintain or expand our current 40 percent tree canopy by 2020. Earlier this year we launched *Lawn to Woodland*, a program to provide free trees, planting and technical services for landowners who agree to convert one to four acres of unused lawn to forest cover.

Every tree we plant improves water quality, air quality and property values.

Available incentives at trees.maryland.gov including coupons, free trees, planting assistance and technical advice make it easy for each of us to act. It's a small investment with a large, long-term payoff.

Plant today — for a better tomorrow.



Josh Davidburg


Joseph P. Gill
Secretary