



**ANNE  
ARUNDEL  
COUNTY**  
M A R Y L A N D  
**Citizens Environmental Commission  
Annual Report 2024**

## **Overview**

This document fulfils the responsibility of the Citizens Environmental Commission (CEC) to submit an annual report to the County Executive of its activities and describes its priorities for the next year. The Commission was chartered by County Executive Steuart Pittman through Executive Order 8 on Earth Day April 2019. This Order provides language regarding the composition of Commissioners, how public meetings are to be held, governance, and recommended actions. Commissioners are tasked with recommending actions to the County Executive to:

- Protect the County’s environmental resources, including, but not limited to: clean air, clean water, open space, forests and wildlife;
- Promote clean, renewable energy solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Defend more than 500 miles of shoreline and nearby communities from rising sea levels.

The Commission is to consist of 13 voting members, as follows:

- One representative from each of the nine watershed assessment and planning areas: Patapsco non-tidal, Patapsco tidal and Bodkin Creek, Magothy River, Severn River, South River, Little Patuxent River, Patuxent River upper, middle and lower portions, West and Rhode Rivers.
- Four representatives from environmental, non-profit organizations with offices in Anne Arundel County.
- Each member shall serve two-year terms and not more than four consecutive terms.

## **Commission Members**

- Jesse Iliff , Arundel Rivers, appointed July 2019, representing Severn River Assn.
- Sally Horner – Magothy River Assn., appointed July 2019, elected Chair June 2023
- Steve Miller – Magothy River, appointed July 2019, Secretary and Vice Chair starting July 2023
- Judy Billage, Severn River, appointed February 2023
- Scott Eden - South River, appointed February 2023
- Caroline Baier-Anderson, Patuxent Middle and Lower and Herring Bay, appointed May 2023
- Ashleigh Diaz– Citizen member, appointed September 2023

- Lloyd Lewis – West & Rhode River, appointed July 2024. This appointment replaces Jim Lyons who resigned from the CEC in March.

At the end of 2024, there were vacancies for the Patapsco Tidal/Bodkin Creek watershed, Patapsco non-tidal, the Little Patuxent and the Patuxent River watershed which had two Commissioners in 2019, representing the Upper River plus the Middle and Lower watershed including Herring Bay. There are also openings for several representatives from non-profit organizations.

Erik Michelsen, Environmental Policy Director, was appointed to the position of County Liaison in February 2023.

### **Governance, Priorities and Committees**

The Commission held six meetings in 2024: January, March, May, July, September and December. The remainder of the Commissioners whose terms were up agreed to resubmit their applications for a second or third term. All 2024 meetings have been available to Commissioners and the public as virtual meetings.

There were no Subcommittee meetings in 2024; all Commission business was completed during regular meetings. The 2024 Subcommittees consisted of Habitat Protection Areas (Sally Hornor, Chair) and septic to sewer and septic upgrades (Cal Baier-Anderson, Chair).

### **County Legislation Discussed by the Commission**

- Bill 86-23, a Redevelopment Bill, was introduced but defeated at the Jan 2024 County Council meeting. The Commission strongly supports redevelopment.
- Bill 72-24, Housing Attainability Act of 2024. The Commission does not support this bill due to the allowance of almost all development to be done without appropriate environmental protection. If this bill were amended to provide leniency to only parcels that were meant for affordable housing, it would be more acceptable to the CEC. A letter stating this position was sent to the CE in December 2024.

Commissioner Iliff provided updates on State legislature actions involving environmental issues in January and March.

### **Presentations at Meetings**

January: Matt Fleming, Resilience Authority, provided an update on the formation and funding of his group. Most of their projects involve stormwater restoration and were in the Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration pipeline. Also, Al Herb, Deputy Director of Environmental Health for the County Health Dept., gave an overview of County on-site septic system upgrades to nitrogen-reducing systems. They collect \$17 million dollars each year for such upgrades and assist residents who qualify for aid.

March: Erik Michelsen gave an overview of the State of Forest Dashboard. He noted that this on-line document is meant to keep track of County activities concerning forest preservation and tree planting. Also, Steve Miller led a discussion on the desire to see the CE put together a County

Stormwater Work Group that would include all interested parties, including environmental advocates and residents who are tasked with maintaining their stormwater BMPs. A letter to this point was sent to the CE in April.

May: Lynn Miller, AA County Planning and Zoning, discussed the siting of solar arrays in the County. The County would prefer to site large solar arrays in industrial-zoned areas but there are not many such areas in the County. They would also like to place solar arrays on rooftops but she stated that the County doesn't know how much rooftop solar panel coverage there is. Also, Rahgu Badmani, DPW, presented an overview of stormwater infrastructure. He said they were working toward more cooperation between Inspections and Permits and DPW. They are trying to better manage stormwater during construction, especially on steep slopes.

July: Michael Stringer of the Office of Planning and Zoning gave an update on progress made toward implementation of environmental goals set out in Plan 2040 and on progress made toward the Green Infrastructure Plan. The County is working to add green stormwater infrastructure in older parts of the County such as Glen Burnie where stormwater infrastructure was built as hardened water conveyance systems.

September: Kathy Gramp, Advocates for Herring Bay (AHB), gave a presentation concerning the environmental impacts of commercial solar arrays in the County. AHB had analyzed all commercial solar arrays in the County with respect to their ecosystem services. It is critical that the impact of solar arrays doesn't reduce ecosystem services such as stormwater mitigation and provision of groundwater supply. She also addressed the issue of sediment runoff from land covered in solar arrays. She urges the County to map all future solar sites and to determine the predicted environmental impacts of solar array infrastructure.

Each of these presentations was recorded during the meeting and posted on the Citizens Environmental Commission website.

### **Key Topics Addressed in 2024**

- Environmental issues related to siting solar arrays in the County. We are following discussions related to a solar array being installed at the Naval Academy Dairy Farm.
- The need for installing more nitrogen-reducing septic systems in the County
- The need for assisting residents at mobile home parks on Sands Road in south County with water, sewer and other environmental issues.
- Request to the CE to establish a Stormwater Workgroup that would include all interested parties involved in development. A letter was sent to the CE in April 2024.
- No progress was made on the extension of Habitat Protection Areas beyond the Critical Area. According to Kelly Krinetz, Planning Administrator for Critical Area, this topic was to be discussed by the Critical Area Commission but no reports have been forthcoming for the last two years.
- Request to locate a second golf course in an area least likely to impact wetlands at Greenbury Point, if a second golf course is to be built. A letter sent to the Commandant, Naval District, in June 2024.

- In December 2023, a letter from the CEC was sent to the CE expressing concern over a net loss of acreage protecting natural resources due to Open Space upzoning in Regions 2, 4 and 7

#### **Priorities for 2025**

- Expansion of the Habitat Protected Areas into areas outside of the Critical Area. The first step in this process is to map the areas that support spawning of anadromous fish and colonial nesting birds. We understand that this will require the time and expertise of County staff and we will continue to request this authorization.
- Continue to look for ways to educate residents about the importance of retrofitting traditional septic systems to low N systems and to encourage conversion of septic to sewer where feasible.
- Continue to follow updates on the Horizon trailer park sewage issue and to try to find ways to reduce the inflow of untreated sewage into the Patuxent.
- Encourage County to reestablish a Stormwater Task Force so that all interested and impacted parties can meet to work on improved stormwater infrastructure, especially in HOAs.
- Continue discussion of siting of solar arrays in the County.
- Request more accurate data regarding private stormwater BMP information in the Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration Watershed application. Similarly, we request that privately owned and maintained stormwater conveyance infrastructure be added to County GIS maps in the same way that the County infrastructure is mapped.
- Work with Save Our Trees to request funding for a County forester to organize and train volunteers to protect trees by removing invasive vines.
- Work to ensure the environmental strategies laid out in Plan2040 are funded in the FY26 budget.