



Facts about... Proposed Revisions to Virginia's Stormwater Regulations

CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION

Clean up of Virginia's rivers and the Chesapeake Bay are being overwhelmed by stormwater pollution—the pollution that runs off of our urban and suburban communities when it rains. A new stormwater management program has been proposed in June 2009 that will allow Virginia to better accommodate both future urbanization and healthy waters. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) urges its adoption.

STORMWATER FACTS

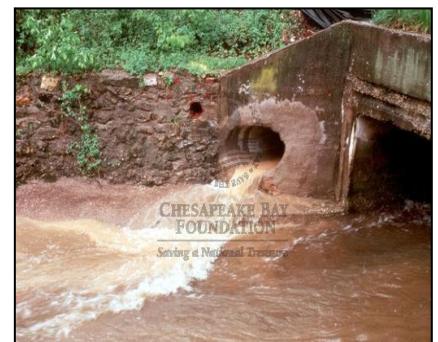
- ◆ Stormwater comes from rain and snowmelt that runs off rooftops, driveways, streets, construction sites, and other hard or "impervious" surfaces and lawns that make up urban and suburban development. Development disrupts the natural features of the landscape by removing vegetation, compacting soil, and preventing rainwater from soaking into the ground. This allows stormwater to quickly flow into waterways where it:
 - Introduces harmful pollutants, including sediment, nutrients, bacteria, pesticides, and metals;
 - Blocks sunlight that underwater grasses need to survive;
 - Reduces oxygen and water clarity required by fish, crabs, and other aquatic life;
 - Smothers insect larvae, fish eggs, oysters, and other bottom-dwellers;
 - Damages stream banks, navigation channels, and reservoirs; and
 - Harms seafood and tourist industries, property values, public health, and adds to cleanup costs.



Forests cleared for development.



Stormwater discharge into a sewer.



Stormwater discharge into a river.

THE PROBLEM—STORMWATER IS HOLDING BACK THE CLEAN-UP OF VIRGINIA'S WATERS

- ◆ Recent reports show that efforts to clean the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries are losing ground specifically because increased stormwater pollution is offsetting progress being made from point sources, agriculture, and other sources (Figure 1).
 - 25% of nutrient and sediment pollution to the Bay is from developed lands—a 15% increase since 1985.
 - Approximately 1,570 stream miles across Virginia are polluted because of stormwater.
 - Unless corrected, stormwater problems will only get worse as more land is developed. At current rates, as much forest and farmland in Virginia will be developed in the next 40 years as was developed in the past 400 years.

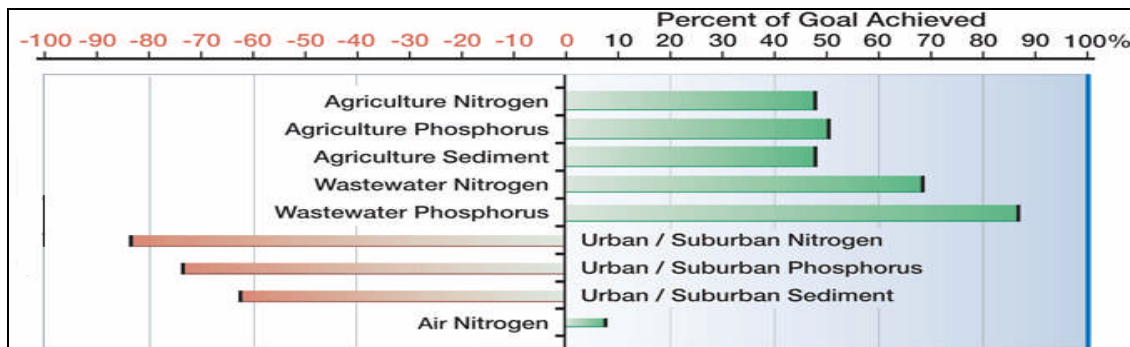


Figure 1: Percent of Chesapeake Bay clean up goals achieved. Urban and suburban stormwater are going backwards.
June 2009

THE SOLUTION—IMPROVED STORMWATER REGULATIONS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ For over three years the Commonwealth has been working to update and improve its stormwater management regulations. In particular, regulations developed by an expert committee were proposed in June 2009 that will address completed residential and commercial developments (“post-construction regulations”) that are a vast improvement over existing programs. Those improvements include:
 1. A “no net increase” in phosphorus pollution standard for newly development lands.
 2. Requirements to better manage stormwater discharge speed and volume that will prevent stream channel erosion, sedimentation, flooding, and property damage.
 3. Incentives for use of Low Impact Development (LID) techniques that promote preservation of native vegetation, soaking rainwater into the soil, and water recycling.
 4. New provisions that are based on the most current science, are fully attainable on site, and are consistent with Virginia’s water quality goals and commitments.
 5. Flexibility for developers and localities to obtain pollution reductions “off site” to ensure that compliance costs are not viewed as excessive or as a barrier to urban redevelopment.
- ◆ Improved stormwater regulations will save money long-term by capturing the true “lifetime” costs of development up front, preserving benefits to sectors of the economy that rely on clean water, decreasing pollution mitigation costs, and lessening the burden on communities and citizens that are disproportionately affected by stormwater pollution.
- ◆ CBF **strongly** supports the proposed post-construction stormwater regulations as an equitable and attainable approach for ensuring that clean water and economic development can coexist in Virginia.



Conventional treatment: Stormwater retention pond.



Low impact development: Bioretention area.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

1. Submit written comments to the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation in support of the regulations by **August 21, 2009**. For more information, visit: www.townhall.state.va.us/L/ViewStage.cfm?stageid=5070.
2. Contact your local representatives, government officials, and other stakeholders to offer your support for the regulations.

QUESTIONS

For further information contact Mike Gerel, Virginia Staff Scientist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation at 804.780.1392 or mgerel@cbf.org.

Photo/Graphic Sources: 1) CBF, 2) DCR, 3) CBF, 4) DCR, and 5) and 6) Low Impact Development Center



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Saving a National Treasure

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