



November 19, 2007

Honorable Edward Reilly  
Councilman, District 7  
Anne Arundel County Council  
P.O. Box 2700  
Annapolis, MD 21404

Dear Mr. Reilly,

South County's watersheds are under stress. The beaches and creeks along Herring Bay experience unhealthy levels of contamination in the summer. Our water clarity is poor, our crab population is down. While the causes of this degradation are complex, the Advocates for Herring Bay are committed to taking action in our local communities to help restore habitat and the health of our waters.

One area where we need your help is in mitigating the impacts of impervious surfaces. Yes, South County is rural—only 7.5 percent of the Herring Bay watershed is classified as impervious surfaces—but the county's maps show that most of those surfaces are in the Critical Area. Runoff from our streets, lawns, and businesses flows straight into the Bay or its tributaries. Thus, much of the sediment and bacteria in our waters probably come from our neighborhoods.

Reducing such runoff county-wide will not be easy or cheap. We urge you to be proactive in working with your colleagues on the County Council to adopt measures that will:

- increase the county's funding for storm-water remediation and watershed restoration;
- spread costs equitably among the sources contributing to runoff; and
- exempt low-income households from any new fees to the extent practical.

We recognize that translating broad goals into tangible programs involves difficult choices, especially if citizens are being asked to pay new fees. Choosing inaction, however, carries a cost too. The recreational and biological value of the Chesapeake Bay is one of the county's greatest economic assets. Failing to stem runoff would increase the cumulative volume of sediment and pollutants, pushing the Bay's fisheries and habitats closer to the tipping point beyond which recovery will be more difficult if not impossible. We hope you and the County Council will opt to invest in a healthier Bay and we look forward to working with you to advance that goal.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Gramp  
President