

Board of Public Works Approves \$122,027 in Agricultural Cost-Share Grants
Grants will help farmers implement conservation practices to protect the environment

ANNAPOLIS, MD (March 24, 2010) – Governor Martin O’Malley announced that the Board of Public Works today approved \$122,027 in agricultural cost-share grants in eight counties for 15 projects that will prevent soil erosion, manage nutrients and safeguard water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay. Together, these projects will prevent approximately 2549 pounds of nitrogen, 684 pounds of phosphorus and 235 tons of soil from entering the Bay and its tributaries. These projects are funded by state general obligation bonds and are not part of MDA's general fund budget allocation. The Board is comprised of the Governor, Treasurer Nancy K. Kopp, and Comptroller Peter Franchot.

“Maryland has been a leader in helping farmers protect soil and water resources by providing conservation grants to install tried and true conservation measures as well as innovative, state-of-the-art practices,” said Governor O’Malley. “Farmers have consistently gone above and beyond to help improve the quality of our Bay, and these cost-share grants help them continue do their part to protect natural resources for future generations, preserve open space, and maintain the rich agricultural heritage of our State. Together, we are smart, green and growing.”

For the past 25 years, the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program has been providing farmers with grants to cover up to 87.5 percent of the cost to install conservation measures known as best management practices (BMPs) on their farms to prevent soil erosion, manage nutrients and safeguard water quality in streams, rivers and the Chesapeake Bay.

Since the program started, farmers have spent over \$12.25 million of their own money to match more than \$98 million in state and federal funds to install over 20,000 water quality best management practices (BMP) or about 2.5 BMPs per day, every day, for 24 years. Installation of agricultural BMPs on farmland will account for 67 percent of 2.5 million pounds of nitrogen of Maryland’s recent 2011 Chesapeake Bay milestones.

Grassed waterways constructed to prevent gully erosion in farm fields, streamside buffers of grasses and trees planted to filter sediment and farm runoff, and animal waste management systems constructed to help farmers safely handle and store manure resources are among more than 30 BMPs currently eligible for MACS grants.

For a summary of Maryland Agricultural Cost Share Program Grants by County, March 24, 2010, visit: www.mda.state.md.us/pdf/3-24-10_bpw_macs.pdf. Follow MDA on Twitter @MdAgDept.

###