

Home Building and the Chesapeake Bay

A Matter of Perspective

As you can see from the following data, residential construction does, indeed, have an impact on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. However, any reasonable person can also see that its impact, while not insignificant, plays a very minimal role in contributing pollutants to our water bodies.

FACT - New construction accounted for just 0.148% of the total 5,900,000 acres in Maryland in 2007 (the most recent data available).¹

FACT - Existing urban and suburban development accounted for 14.3% (843,700 acres) of the total 5,900,000 acres in Maryland in 2007 (the most recent data available). In contrast, new construction accounted for less than 0.2%.

FACT - Agriculture (40.9%), wastewater treatment facilities (27.4%), existing urban and suburban development (10.8%), forests (12.2%) and septic systems (7.1%) account for more than 97% of the total **NITROGEN** load into the Chesapeake Bay. New construction accounts for just 0.3% of the total.

FACT - Agriculture (46.5%), existing urban and suburban development (17.8%), wastewater treatment facilities (24.5%) and forests (8.8%) account for nearly 98% of the total **PHOSPHORUS** load into the Chesapeake Bay. New construction accounts for just 1.4% of the total.

FACT - Agriculture (62.7%), existing urban and suburban development (21.0%) and forests (11%) account for 94.7% of the total

SEDIMENT load into the Chesapeake Bay in comparison to new construction, which accounts for just 4.7% of the total.

FACT - Nearly 75% of URBAN areas in Maryland are **PERVIOUS** surfaces, which allow water to filter into the ground and natural groundwater to recharge, help with filtration of pollutants, and reduce erosion and flooding.

A Statement of Commitment

While it is obvious that restoring the water quality of the Chesapeake Bay requires a strategy that focuses proportionately on the contributing sources of pollution, the residential building industry commits itself to continuing to minimize its impacts with the development and employment of Best Management Practices on active building sites and by educating home owners to become effective stewards of the Chesapeake. A clean Bay is in everyone's best interest.

¹ This and the following bullet points based upon the latest version of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Watershed Model, released May 10, 2010. (U.S. EPA, 2010. Chesapeake Bay Phase 5 Community Watershed Model 5.3. Chesapeake Bay Program Office, Annapolis MD. May 2010.)

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