

ST. MARY'S COUNTY GOVERNMENT
BOARD OF COUNTY
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August 7, 2007

The Honorable Roy P. Dyson
20247 Point Lookout Road, Unit 2
P.O. Box 229
Great Mills, MD 20603

Subject: Renewed Concerns over the Adequacy of Water Supplies in Southern Maryland

Reference: Maryland Geological Survey (MGS) Administrative Report, June 2005, titled "Water Supply Potential of the Coastal Plain Aquifers in Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's Counties, with Emphasis on the Upper Patapsco and Lower Patapsco Aquifers"

Dear Senator Dyson:

The Board of County Commissioners for St. Mary's County recently received a briefing from the County's Water Quality Policy Task Force covering the projected demand and availability of water resources for County residents and businesses. Included in that briefing was information from a 2002 report that raised some concerns which we would like to share with you in light of your role on the Advisory Committee on the Management & Protection of the State's Water Resources.

This Board has communicated with you in the past, notable last year when we forwarded the letter attached as enclosure 1 (hereafter referred to as "SMC Water Management") outlining our strategy for managing the water we withdraw from our aquifers to support life here in the County. The basis for the Letter was the analysis contained in the MGS Administrative Report Referenced above (hereafter referred to as the "Southern Maryland Water Adequacy Report"). Our letter also contained a number of related issues we wished investigated. Until very recently, our staff had no knowledge of a separate 2002 MGS Report attached as enclosure 2 (hereafter referred to as the "Anne Arundel Report") or of the conclusions reached therein.

Now that we have had an opportunity to review the findings in the Anne Arundel Report, we have a number of significant concerns important enough to bring to your immediate attention. Each of these is discussed below.

Continued Use of the Aquia Aquifer. We have always understood that state policy does not allow Management Levels to be exceeded. However, the Anne Arundel Report, as quoted below, reveals that management levels have been exceeded for seven years in portions of Anne Arundel County.

“As of 2000, water levels in the Aquia aquifer have exceeded the management level within a 2-mile-wide band located in the central part of Southern Anne Arundel County.” Enclosure 2, page 4.

As you know, both Calvert and St. Mary’s Counties rely heavily on the Aquia and plan to continue to do so. Consequently, the implications of the Anne Arundel Report (enclosure 2) on the decisions we made in our SMC Water Management letter (enclosure 1) require immediate clarification.

Impacts of Reaching the Management Level in an Aquifer. In our SMC Water Management (enclosure 1) letter, we also indicated the need for a clear explanation of the specific steps that would be taken by MDE when the management level is reached in a particular area. For example, which well drilling permits would be denied and how large a geographical area would be covered by such a denial. Wording from the 2002 Anne Arundel Report (enclosure 2) gives this request new importance:

“Withdrawals from the Aquia aquifer...in Calvert County and...St. Mary’s County by 2020...[will] cause water levels in the Aquia aquifer to further exceed the management level [in Southern Anne Arundel County] in a band as much as 3 miles wide, extending from Waysons Corner to the Rhode River.” Enclosure 2, Page 4.

Alternate Drinking Water Sources Are Needed. As we have pointed out, if growth is allowed to continue at projected rates, our aquifers will reach a point where they will no longer be able to supply our needs (enclosure 1, paragraph 5). The truth of this statement was given even greater strength with the Anne Arundel Report’s conclusion (enclosure 2, pg. 4) that allowing additional withdrawals from the Aquia beyond 2000

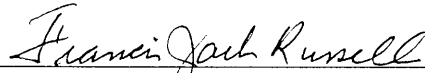
“will cause water levels to further exceed the management level in the central part of Southern Anne Arundel County. Therefore, as defined by the present management guidelines, the Aquia Aquifer has reached its maximum allowable yield.”

Additionally, we have just learned that the Maryland Department of Planning population estimates for St. Mary’s County have recently been adjusted upward by 19 percent from those used to generate the results in the above referenced 2005 Southern Maryland Water Adequacy Report. If these new figures are but the first in a series of upward adjustments, then aquifer demands may be even greater. Clearly, immediate action must be taken to investigate ways of satisfying our drinking water needs beyond the 2030. We believe we must start analysis now to insure orderly transition to these new supplies.

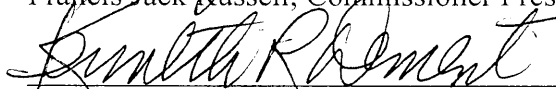
How Safe are Our Aquifer Recharge Areas? In our SMC Water Management letter (enclosure 1, paragraph 3), we also asked that more in-depth analysis be provided on the aquifer outcrop areas that recharge the Aquia, Piney Point and Patapsco Aquifers. Specifically, we wish to know where the recharge of our aquifers comes from and how these areas are being safeguarded against land use actions that might damage or pollute our drinking water supplies. We understand that some of our recharge areas are in Anne Arundel County, so our previous comments appear particularly relevant.

We ask you to use all of the resources at your disposal to provide us with definitive answers to address the concerns expressed above. We are available to discuss these issues with you in more detail if necessary, and would appreciate your thoughts on these matters as soon as possible.

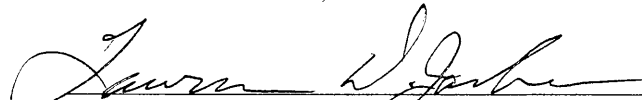
Sincerely,
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FOR ST. MARY'S COUNTY, MARYLAND**



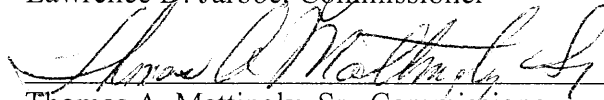
Francis Jack Russell, Commissioner President



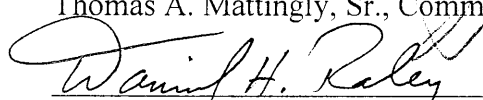
Kenneth R. Dement, Commissioner



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Thomas A. Mattingly, Sr., Commissioner



Daniel H. Raley, Commissioner

BOCC:JBW:JS:dg
T:All/Consent/5435

Enclosures:

1. St. Mary's County Commissioner Letter, January 17, 2006, to the Honorable Roy P. Dyson, Southern Maryland Representative to the State Water Resources Management Advisory Committee
2. MGS Report, 2002, titled Future of Water Supply from the Aquia and Magothy Aquifers in Southern Anne Arundel County, Maryland

cc: Board of County Commissioners for Charles & Calvert Counties

Delegate John L. Bohanan, Jr.

Delegate Anthony J. O'Donnell

Delegate John F. Wood, Jr.

Sheri T. Wilson, Secretary, MDE

Dr. Saeid Kasraei, Md. Dept. of the Environment

M. Gordon Wolman, Ph.D., Chairman, Advisory Committee on the Management & Protection of the State's Water Resources

✓ John B. Wheeler, Chair, St. Mary's County Water Policy Task Force & Commission on the Environment

Steve King, Director, Metropolitan Commission

Denis Canavan, Director, Dept. of Land Use & Growth Management