

NAHB Requests Extended Comment Period for Chesapeake Bay Plan

Citing the national implications, extremely high costs and technical complexity of an EPA proposal for reducing pollution in the Chesapeake Bay, NAHB has formally requested that the agency expand the timeframe for public comments from the original 45 days. A similar request for more time was made by 21 members of Congress, who signed onto a letter by Rep. Tim



Holden (D-Pa.). In response to that letter, the EPA said the deadline cannot be extended, citing a settlement agreement with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation that set a deadline of Dec. 31 for finalizing a proposal. The **Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) proposal** sets limits on the amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment that each state is allowed to discharge into the bay's watershed, which includes parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. In turn, the states have proposed discharge limits for agriculture, new development and municipal wastewater treatment plants. But taking the steps necessary to meet these proposed discharge limits will cost billions of dollars. For example, Washington, D.C. officials estimate it would cost \$4 billion to renovate just one sewage facility to bring it into compliance with the plan.

In the wake of NAHB's formal request for a longer comment period on the proposal, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation issued a press statement calling our action "an attempt to delay and derail the clean-up process for short-term profit." NAHB CEO Jerry Howard immediately refuted this claim in a letter to the foundation's president. In that letter, Jerry noted that "Even the EPA admits that the computer modeling to propose pollutant loadings for the TMDL is defective and will not be fixed until after the rule is finalized.

Yet the EPA has never shared the data it used to arrive at the TMDLs with those stakeholders who will implement them." Jerry also reiterated the far-reaching implications of TMDL rules for the 17 million residents in the six-state watershed. Read more in **Nation's Building News** or contact **Calli Schmidt**, 800-368-5242, x8132.