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September 12, 2010

Chesapeake Bay Cleanup or "Snow Job"?



Beware legislation in sheep's clothing. Or perhaps I should say, "don't let them pull the wool over your eyes."

But Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell has done just that by endorsing a proposed bill called the *Chesapeake Bay Reauthorization and Improvement Act*. McDonnell calls this legislation "the right step forward to continue the fight to preserve and protect the Chesapeake Bay."

Improvement usually implies a change for the better, but many, including the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF), are not supporting this bill. These well-informed folks say that the legislation would be a huge step backward in efforts to clean up the Chesapeake Bay because it does next to nothing to ensure that farmers achieve pollution reduction goals. Think about those cow chewing their cud while standing in a creek. Then remember what's coming out the other end of these bovines, and ultimately into the Chesapeake watershed.

CBF prefers the *Chesapeake Clean Water Act (CCWA)*, introduced by Congressman Elijah Cummings of Maryland and Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland because it requires the EPA to create strict stormwater pollution control standards. But Farm Bureau groups balk at the more stringent cleanup regs in CCWA and endorse the farmer-friendly "Improvement" Act.

The *Chesapeake Clean Water Act* would provide financial incentives to Bay area states to create meaningful pollution reduction plans, authorize more than \$2 billion in federal funds for cleanup projects, plus hold the states accountable for spending this money wisely and meeting their goals.

Putting the Bay on a *pollution diet* is a worthy goal, but a diet without measurable standards is like going on a diet without a working weight scale to monitor your progress. Total Maximum Daily Load (or TMDLs) are like calories to you and me, and someone needs to count them.