

Proposed Chester River No Discharge Zone

Fact Sheet



SUMMARY: At the request of the Chester River Association, the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources and the Environment will apply to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for designation of the Chester River and its tributaries as a No Discharge Zone (NDZ). Public comments will be accepted through October 2014 at the Chester River Association. The EPA regional administrator will make a determination within 90 days of receipt of the application. Following this, notice will appear in the Federal and Maryland Registers. If approved, the NDZ may take effect during the 2015 boating season.

What is a No Discharge Zone (NDZ)?

A no discharge zone (NDZ) is an area in which both treated *and* untreated sewage discharges from vessels are prohibited. It is already illegal to discharge raw/untreated sewage within 3 miles of the U.S. Coast. Within NDZ boundaries, vessel operators are required to retain their sewage discharges onboard for disposal at sea (beyond three miles from shore) or onshore at a pumpout facility.

How will the NDZ be enforced if it becomes law? Both the Natural Resources Police and U.S. Coast Guard will be able to enforce it if they see violations on the water. The Maryland Department of the Environment will be authorized to issue civil penalties not to exceed \$10,000 per violation.

Where Can Boaters Find a Pumpout Station? Are they reliable? Chester River Association and DNR staff have inspected pumpouts in the proposed NDZ. We have found there to be 16 grant funded units available—either fixed at a pier or portable. These must be made available to the general boating public for no more that \$5 for the first 50 gallons. A list of grant funded pumpouts is available at dnr.maryland.gov/boating/pumpout. Boaters can report inoperable pumpouts to DNR at pumpout@dnr.state.md.us or 410-260-8772.

When Could the Proposed NDZ Become Effective? During the 2015 boating season, pending EPA approval.

Why Seek NDZ Designation? The Chester River is classified as impaired by Maryland Department of Environment because of low dissolved oxygen related to excess nutrients. Under the total daily maximum load qualifications, 100% of the Chester River is considered impaired for either nutrients, sediment, bacteria or a combination. The river is an important economic driver for the region, providing jobs and revenue through tourism, commercial and recreational fishing, and boating. Providing greater environmental protection with an NDZ will help improve the health of the water, and protect the important ecological, economical, and cultural resources of the Chester River.

PUBLIC MEETINGS SCHEDULED:

Tuesday 23 September 6:00 p.m.

Chestertown Town Hall

118 N. Cross Street, Chestertown, MD 21620

Thursday 2 October 6:00 p.m.

Rock Hall Town Hall

5585 N. Main Street Rock Hall, MD 21661

Thursday 30 October 6:00 p.m.

Queenstown Town Office

7013 Main Street, Queenstown, MD 21658

Comments or Questions: Albert Leavell 410-810-7556 or aleavell@chesterriverassociation.org

Learn More: <http://water.epa.gov/polwaste/vwd/index.cfm> ♦ www.dnr.maryland.gov/boating/pumpout