

# Environmental News Brief

Presented by the Baltimore Metropolitan Council for the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board

The following news "briefs" highlight recent news regarding transportation-related environmental issues, primarily air quality, affecting the Baltimore region. Please note that this brief is not all inclusive of the variety and magnitude of activities in the region. It is intended for informational purposes only; refer to the source, guidance, or program for additional information.

## [Diesel Workshop Sparks Interest in Collaborative](#)



The Diesel Directions Workshop, held on February 28 in Washington, D.C. was the kickoff event for the Mid-Atlantic Diesel Collaborative. The event featured information on clean diesel technology,

organization and goals of the Collaborative, the National Clean Diesel Campaign, successful diesel retrofit projects occurring in the region, and funding opportunities. The second half of the workshop featured four sector forum meetings on freight, ports, school buses, and public fleets/ urban redevelopment (construction). According to the Collaborative website, the sector forums, "will identify and seek funding for potential diesel emission reduction projects and share information on emission reduction technologies and funding sources."

[Click for more information on the Mid-Atlantic Diesel Collaborative.](#)

## [New Clean Diesel Web Site](#)

The Diesel Technology Forum has created a new web site with more features including diesel news headlines, an improved search feature, and a new Policy Insider feature which has information on how the benefits of clean diesel technology figure into environmental and energy policy. The web site also features a retrofit toolkit, information on funding, and a diesel blog.

[Click to check out the website.](#)

March 23, 2006

- [Diesel Workshop Sparks Interest in Collaborative](#)
- [New Clean Diesel Web Site](#)
- [Baltimore Region's First PM2.5 Conformity Approved](#)
- [Maryland State Senate Passes Air Quality Legislation](#)
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## ***Baltimore Region's First PM2.5 Conformity Approved***

In February, the first conformity determination for fine particulate matter, for the Baltimore region was approved by the Federal Highway Administration and the Federal Transit Administration. This conformity determination addresses the region's FY 2006-2010 Transportation Improvement Program and the 2004 Baltimore Regional Transportation Plan.

[Click to find the PM2.5 Conformity Determination.](#)

## ***Maryland State Senate Passes Air Quality Legislation***

On March 20, the Healthy Air Act was passed in the State Senate by a vote of 33 to 14. The bill would control emissions of nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide, and mercury from Maryland power plants and would require the Governor to include Maryland in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative.

[Click for more information on Senate Bill 154.](#)

## ***Natural Food Market Makes Big Wind Power Purchase***



As of this past winter, Whole Foods has become the largest purchaser of wind power in North America. They are purchasing renewable energy credits to offset 100 percent of the power that their company uses, including all of their stores. According to Whole Foods, the purchase will prevent over 700 million pounds of carbon dioxide pollution that would otherwise have occurred this year.

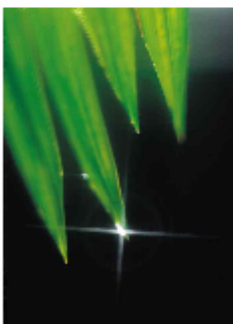
[Click for more information.](#)

## ***Book Published on Green Building***

*Green Office Buildings: A Practical Guide to Development* was recently published by the Urban Land Institute. This guidebook provides instruction on how to create an environmentally sustainable "green" office building.

[Click here for more information.](#)

## ***Earth Day at the Eco-Festival***



Celebrate Earth Day and the environment at the Eco-Festival at Middle Branch Park in Baltimore, on April 22 from noon until 5PM! There will be food, music, exhibits, demonstrations, and activities. The Eco-Festival is part of Baltimore Green Week 2006. For more information on the Eco-Festival, email [info@baltimoregreenweek.org](mailto:info@baltimoregreenweek.org). There is a call for volunteers on April 1, from 9 AM to noon to help get the Middle Branch Park ready. For more information on volunteering, contact Kidada Fields at (410) 448-5663 ext. 128 or email [Kidada.Fields@parksandpeople.org](mailto:Kidada.Fields@parksandpeople.org)

[Click to download the Eco-Festival flyer.](#)

## *May is Clean Commute Month*



May marks the ninth annual Clean Commute initiative, when the Clean Commute Partnership reminds all of us in the Baltimore region about the relationship between air quality and personal transportation choices. During the month, the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC), the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), the Clean Air Partners organization, and others will sponsor a series of outreach activities to raise awareness of alternative transportation options.

Highlights of the effort include informational booths at the Baltimore Flower Mart and the Towsontown Festival during the first weekend in May, as well as Bike to Work Day on May 19. This year's Bike to Work Day will feature early morning rallies at the Annapolis City Dock, Baltimore City Hall, Harford County Government Building (Bel Air), and the Towson Court House Square.

Because the Clean Commute Partnership wants to include those people who must continue to drive alone, a special component has been added to this year's initiative: Clean Car Clinics. Sponsored by MDE and organized by BMC, the clinics will provide free vehicle inspections to interested drivers. Certified automotive technicians will conduct comprehensive check-ups, which are designed to keep vehicles running efficiently (hence cleanly) and safely. A schedule of clinics is being developed and will soon be available. For the latest information on the Clean Car Clinics or any other aspect of Clean Commute Month, visit the [www.cleancommute.com](http://www.cleancommute.com) web site. You may also contact Russ Ulrich at [rulrich@baltometro.org](mailto:rulrich@baltometro.org).

## *Legislative Weekly Reports*

The Baltimore Metropolitan Council publishes a weekly report on legislation in the Maryland General Assembly that is related to transportation, community development, and the environment. This session of the Maryland General Assembly will run through April 10, 2006.

[Click to view the latest Legislative Weekly Report.](#)

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