June 20, 2014

The Honorable Martin O’Malley
Office of the Governor
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: Your Support Needed for Draft COMAR 26.11.38

Dear Governor O’Malley:

We are writing to urge you to ensure that Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) does not weaken its draft proposed rule on nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions from coal-fired power plants (draft COMAR 26.11.38). We understand that MDE is considering delaying portions of the rule as a result of industry pressure.

MDE’s proposed rule would require that coal-fired power plants with state-of-the-art emissions controls for NOx operate those controls commensurate with historically demonstrated control efficiencies. It also gives units without state-of-the-art emission controls two years to modernize their controls.

Chesapeake PSR is particularly concerned that in the Baltimore area two coal-fired power plants are operating without state-of-the-art pollution controls. From a medical and public health perspective, this is unacceptable. These plants emit high levels of NOx, an important precursor to the formation of ground level ozone. Ozone pollution is a serious public health issue in Baltimore, particularly among young children, the elderly, those with existing health problems, and outdoor workers. NOx also contributes to the creation of fine particulate matter, which can cause serious lung and heart problems.

Chesapeake PSR applauds MDE’s efforts to address the public health issues caused by air emissions from coal-fired power plants. We believe that finalizing this rule as currently drafted would represent a major public health victory for you and your administration.

Sincerely,

Tim Whitehouse
Executive Director