

Future Fiscal Impact for FY'15

Over the past year, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD), and Department of Economic Development – Agricultural Services Division (DED-AS) have discussed a partnership to help address Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDL) and Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) goals in the agricultural and rural areas of the county.

MSCD is responsible for providing the technical assistance necessary to achieve the agricultural sector WIP goals, while DEP is responsible for achieving WIP goals in the urban areas of the county through the MS4 permit process. Funding from the Water Quality Protection Charge (WQPC) is needed to provide MSCD additional resources to assist the agricultural community in implementing conservation best management practices. WQPC funds assessed on residences in the rural and agricultural areas of the county must be used to help fund water quality improvements in rural communities through the conservation work administered by MSCD.

The DEP and MSCD are working on the details of a funding proposal that would allow WQPC revenues from these rural residents to be used for projects in their own communities rather than on down-county stormwater management efforts. In addition, a number of opportunities exist to achieve water quality improvements in the urban areas of the county through MSCD initiatives. These include nutrient trading between the urban and ag sectors, stormwater credits for conservation practices done on farms within the MS4 area, shared outreach/education goals, and a host of other collaborative efforts that will improve overall water quality throughout the county.

MSCD currently receives funding from DED-AS for staff and operating expenses. Through this proposal, funding for MSCD would come instead from the WQPC via an appropriation from DEP to DED-AS.