



MARYLAND LEAGUE  
OF CONSERVATION VOTERS

---

## Press Release

June 16, 2009, Embargoed until 10:30am

Contact: Aaron Mintzes, amintzes@mdlcv.org, 410-280-9855 x204 or 919-302-6393 cell  
or Cindy Schwartz cschwartz@mdlcv.org, cell: 240-535-6050

# General Assembly's Conservation Scores Suggests a House Divided and a "Mushy Middle" Senate

*Strong Conservation Majority in the House Highlights Great Divide Between Pro and Anti Conservation Delegates; Slim Conservation Minority in the Senate Reveals a Chamber Where Good Bills Go to Die.*

Annapolis, MD. Today the Maryland League of Conservation Voters released its annual legislative scorecard. The *2009 Maryland General Assembly Scorecard* grades each member of the state legislature on key environmental votes in this year's legislative session, including committee, amendment, and floor votes.

While overall score averages were up slightly in 2009 compared to last year, they also reveal a story of two very different legislative bodies"

- This year 57 members of the House of Delegates scored 100%. A solid majority, 85 of the 141 Delegates, scored 80% or better with 21 scoring 20% or below.
- The Senate, on the other hand, did not perform nearly as well. A majority of the Senators, 25, scored between 20% and 80%.
- The average score for the Senate was 62 percent, compared to 59 percent in 2008, while the average score for the House of Delegates was 72 percent compared to 71 percent in 2008.

Candidates endorsed by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters in the 2006 elections earned above average scores of 77 percent in the Senate and 93 percent in the House of Delegates.

"The scores tell the story," said Maryland League of Conservation Voters Executive Director Cindy Schwartz, "Generally speaking, as you look back at the last session I think when it comes to the environment we are making progress. Certainly the passage of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act, the preservation of Program Open Space and the Standing and Septics bills area all things to be proud of and we commend all the members of the General Assembly for passing them. But when you juxtapose those victories against the environmental challenges we face, it becomes clear we need to do a lot more if we are going to deal with the most vexing problems like the decline of the Chesapeake Bay, out of control development and the effects of global warming."

Schwartz continued, "The House of Delegates is the place for bold environmental solutions. From the leadership to the rank-and-file members, a strong conservation majority of Delegates champion the important environmental issues that Marylanders care about most. But as those of us who lobby know first hand, the Senate is often where good environmental legislation either is weakened or killed all together."

Ms. Schwartz noted that the environmental community had major wins on top priorities; but despite these substantial gains, the 426<sup>th</sup> legislative session saw many good bills receive the blessing of the House only to fail in the Senate.

Ms. Schwartz continued: "The House passed a bill that would ban BPA, a toxin found in baby bottles, with only a single lone dissenter. When the bill came to the Senate, the bill failed to garner even a majority in committee. The same is true

for another bill that sought to ban a toxic flame retardant. A consortium of firefighters, public health, consumer rights, and environmental advocates rallied an overwhelming majority in the House only to have the Senate committee not even schedule a vote. And again on smart and fair growth legislation, we saw the House step up on progressive land use reform while the Senate demurred.”

Ms. Schwartz continued: “We’re fortunate to have many dedicated, conservation champions in the Maryland Senate, like Senators Mike Lenett, from Montgomery County and David Harrington of Prince Georges County. Both of these freshman Senators represent a fresh perspective that when coupled with long time environmental champions like Senators Brian Frosh of Montgomery County or Paul Pinsky of Prince Georges give us hope.

“I’m so pleased to have a perfect conservation score” said Senator David Harrington. “As a member of the Senate’s Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee, I face these important issues everyday. Maryland needs substantial smart growth reform, something I’ll continue to fight for. I urge more of my colleagues who share this view to join me.”

Cindy Schwartz added, “Unfortunately, their numbers are overshadowed by a swell of Senators who seem content to hang out in the middle when it comes to the environment. There are few states that can match the environmental ethic engrained in so many Marylanders. Yet this scorecard reveals that that strong sentiment is only given lip service by our Senators.”

Senator Mike Lenett from Montgomery County said, “The environmental movement is at a critical juncture. In so many ways -- from alleviating climate change to saving the Chesapeake Bay and our rivers and streams to conserving open space to growing in a smarter and more sustainable fashion -- we face enormous environmental challenges that require strong action now before matters get too far beyond our control. Yet current economic conditions present severe limitations that magnify these challenges. Given this confluence of events, it is paramount that our leaders have the political will to take the strong measures necessary to protect our environment for future generations.”

“This was a tough year, not just for legislators but also for the environment,” Schwartz continued.. “Against the backdrop of a failing economy and state budget shortfalls, we worried many vital programs - to preserve open space, reduce runoff, and clean the Chesapeake Bay - might experience drastic cuts. Instead, with the help of some very important allies like the Chair of the Budget’s Transportation and Environment subcommittee, Delegate Tawanna Gaines, much of the funding we sought remained largely intact.”

“Conservation is not just about protecting the environment. It is also about human health, national security and long-term economic sustainability,” said District 31 Delegate Steve Schuh, an important conservation champion on the House Appropriations Committee and the state’s highest scoring Republican. Delegate Schuh continued: “As a committed conservative, I view conserving the environment as integral to our philosophy of government. I’m proud to share the strongest environmental score for Republican members of the General Assembly this year.”

One of the trends noted by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters was the difference in regional scores. “Looking at the low scores on the Eastern Shore and in Western Maryland, we see an obvious disconnect between the threats to natural resources in these areas—particularly from global warming and over-development—and the way the elected officials in these regions are voting,” said Ms. Schwartz.

“In summary, this was a good year,” said Ms. Schwartz. “The scores are in, and it’s clear the environmental community and conservationists have their work cut out for them. As we begin gearing up for elections next fall, the Maryland League of Conservation Voters will continue to educate members of the General Assembly about what is most important for our air, land, water, and people.”

The *2009 General Assembly Scorecard* measures floor and committee votes on a wide range of important conservation issues that are chosen by the Maryland League of Conservation Voters’ Board of Directors in conjunction with the staff of Environment Maryland. The full scorecard is available online at <http://www.mdlcv.org/scorecards/2009marylandgeneralassemblyscorecard>

## 2009 General Assembly Highest Scores

**Senate (100%):** Brochin, Conway, Frosh, Gladden, Harrington, Lenett, Madaleno, Peters, Pinsky, Raskin, Rosapepe  
**House (100%):** Ali, Anderson, Barnes, Barve, Benson, Bobo, Bromwell, Busch, Cardin, Carr, V. Clagett, Conway, Davis, Doory, Dumais, Frick, Frush, Gaines, Gilchrist, Glenn, Gutierrez, Hammen, Hixson, Howard, Hubbard, Hucker, Ivey, Kaiser, Kramer, Lafferty, Lee, Levi, Manno, McHale, McIntosh, Mizeur, Montgomery, Morhaim, Murphy, Nathan-Pulliam, Niemann, Olszewski, Pena-Melnyk, Pendergrass, Ramirez, Rice, Rosenberg, Ross, Schuler, Simmons, Sophocleus, Stein, Stukes, Tarrant, V. Turner, Waldstreicher

## Lowest Scores (below 20%)

**Senate (below 20%):** Colburn, Greenip, Haines, Jacobs, Mooney, Simonaire  
**House (below 20%):** Bartlett, Bates, Boteler, Dwyer, Elliott, Impallaria, Jennings, McComas, McDonough, Miller, Myers, Norman, O'Donnell, Serafini, Shank, Shewell, Smigiel, Sossi, Stocksdale, Stull, Walkup

## **Highest Scoring District = District 18, 20, Montgomery, District 21 Montgomery/ Prince George's, District 43 Baltimore City, District 47 Prince George's = 100%**

Senator Madaleno, Delegate Carr, Delegate Gutierrez, Delegate Waldstreicher  
Senator Raskin, Delegate Hucker, Delegate Mizeur, Delegate Hixson  
Senator Rosapepe, Delegate Barnes, Delegate, Frush, Delegate Pena-Melnyk  
Senator Conway, Delegate Doory, Delegate Anderson, Delegate McIntosh  
Senator Harrington, Delegate Ivey, Delegate Niemann, Delegate Ramirez

## **Lowest Scoring District = District 4, Frederick/ Carroll = 16%**

Senator Brinkley 38%, Delegate Stull 11%, Delegate Elliott 14%, Delegate Bartlett 0%

<b>Averages</b>	<b>2009</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2007</b>	<b>05-06</b>	<b>03-04</b>
Senate	62%	59%	69%	59%	68%
Republicans	24%	12%	38%	13%	18%
Democrats	77%	79%	82%	79%	90%
House	72%	71%	80%	67%	73%
Republicans	25%	29%	50%	26%	32%
Democrats	88%	85%	91%	85%	92%
Unaffiliated	43%				

## **2009 Regional Scores**

<b>Region</b>	<b>Average Score</b>	
	<b>Senate</b>	<b>House</b>
Eastern Shore	19.8	44.7
Western MD	26.6	24
Harford Co	28	37.6
Southern MD	59	64.8
Central MD	60.5	80.1
Baltimore Co	61.1	70.5
Montgomery Co	83.8	97.2
Baltimore City	87	93.7

###

For more than 25 years, the non-partisan Maryland League of Conservation Voters has served as the independent political voice for the environment. We advocate for sound conservation policies, promote environmentally responsible candidates, and hold individual elected officials accountable through our scorecards and reports.