

**What is the Waterfront Overlay?** The WO is a zoning classification in Lancaster County that applies to those parcels of land in the county recorded on or after May 11, 1988, which are for residential use or residential development and lie within 800 feet of tidal waters and wetlands.

**What does the WO require?** 2 acre lot minimums, 100 foot buffer setback from the water, average of 200 foot lot width on the water, but no less than 180 feet.

**What were the prior requirements?** Prior to 1990 the requirements were 1 acre on the water, average of 150 foot frontage ( 100 foot minimum ), within 600 feet of the water with a 75 foot buffer.

**What is the intent of the WO?** It is designed to protect the water, tidal shores and wetlands.

**Are the requirements reasonable?** Yes. A University of Virginia Study in 1989 recommended that the zone include all land 1500 feet from the water have a minimum lot size of 2 acres. In Maryland since 1989 The Critical Area Act recognizes that the land immediately surrounding the Bays and their tributaries has the greatest potential to affect water quality and wildlife habitat and thus designated all lands within 1,000 feet of tidal waters or adjacent tidal wetlands as the "Critical Area."

**Do the Requirements Prevent Development?** No, but development must be at a density consistent with the requirements.

**The Waterfront Overlay has Been in Place almost 20 years – why are changes being asked for?** \$\$\$, \$\$\$\$ and more \$\$\$\$\$\$!!!!!! Waterfront land, especially waterfront land developed at higher densities can generate large profits for the investors and developers. The citizens of Lancaster County supported and put into place the WO to protect the water and keep a single family, home oriented community. Most of our waterfront land is now developed in that manner and that is what attracts people to our community. Redevelopment of the waterfront is what some would like to see to maximize their profits. Once the WO is "broken" investors/developers will rapidly buy existing single family homes and lots to be redeveloped for higher density condos, townhouses etc. The existing homes will be "scraped" off the lots just has happened in many places on the East Coast on the waterfront.

**Anything Else?** Yes. Some will argue all you need is a minimum 100 foot waterside buffer. This ignores two facts: First, we have many areas where due to old practices we do not have a 100 foot buffer to our already impaired waters. To be truly effective the buffer needs to be **wooded plants!** How many of our buffers are lawns or hardened areas? Second, Lancaster County is zoned by right at suburban densities and the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors have indicated they will not change this. We need as much buffer as possible and minimum density on the water to compensate for the allowed high density on the interior of our county and all the runoff that will head for our waters. It is also likely that in a few years the EPA will be legally forced to impose limits on discharges into the Bay because the states have not met their goals. Our WO helps with that.