

Bay cleanup to miss 2010 deadline

January 5 2007

The Chesapeake Bay cleanup will miss a 2010 goal, a government official said, prompting environmentalists to say they wished the disclosure had come sooner.

"We've been arguing for at least four years that in order to reach those goals, they need to accelerate implementation," of cleanup efforts, said Roy Hoagland, a Chesapeake Bay Foundation vice president, told The Washington Post. "That is not new information."

Rich Batiuk, an associate director of the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program, said the Chesapeake 2000 Agreement's multibillion-dollar cleanup was well short of its deadline. At the current rate, Batiuk said, "we're talking about restoring the Chesapeake decades from now."

One reason, Batiuk told the newspaper, is booming development along the bay's watershed, which stretches from southern Virginia to Cooperstown, N.Y.

Environmentalists counter that research and voluntary pollution-reduction programs occupied most of the time to date, arguing that that new laws or stringent enforcement might have accomplished more.

In the 6 1/2 years since the program began, progress was made, Batiuk said, such as regrowth of protective grasses and reduction of nitrogen and phosphorus. But the shellfish levels are below the 2010 goals, as are underwater grasses and oxygen levels, the Post said.

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Citation: Bay cleanup to miss 2010 deadline (2007, January 5) retrieved 27 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2007-01-bay-cleanup-deadline.html>

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