

# Progress on Pollution in the Washington Area

Monday, February 19, 2007; A18

Readers were shortchanged by the article enumerating deadlines missed by the Environmental Protection Agency ["The Deadlines That Failed," Metro, Feb. 13]. The piece largely ignored the fact that federal and local partners have dramatically reduced pollution in the D.C. metropolitan area.

Your readers should know that:

- The air in the Washington area is significantly cleaner than it was a decade ago thanks to tough federal and state requirements. For example, the number of days that exceeded the ozone standard dropped from 41 in 1997 to just seven in 2005.
- The EPA has taken major enforcement actions in the Washington area to improve environmental conditions, including Clean Water Act settlements that will eliminate billions of gallons of raw sewage discharges into area waterways, and a record penalty of \$3.1 million against a Virginia company to protect against underground fuel tank leaks.
- The Chesapeake Bay is healthier than it has been in decades; underwater bay grasses have doubled and the striped bass has been officially restored.

More work needs to be done, but area residents should know that the EPA, with its partners, is accelerating the pace of environmental protection.

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