

Maryland Power Plant Research Program Promotes the Beneficial Use of CCPs as a Means to Protect Maryland's Natural Resources

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ABSTRACT

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources Power Plant Research Program (PPRP) is a non-regulatory program that ensures that Maryland meets electricity demands at reasonable costs, while protecting the State's valuable natural resources. PPRP conducts research on power plant impacts to Maryland's natural resources and recommends balanced, long-term solutions to minimize impacts. PPRP's efforts with respect to natural resource protection have focused recently on developing innovative approaches to meet the State's goal of encouraging development through a Smart Growth ethos. Maryland has recognized that uncontrolled development has an adverse impact to the Chesapeake Bay, one of Maryland's greatest natural resources.

PPRP recognizes that the beneficial use of coal combustion products (CCPs) can prevent development of new landfill sites which consume valuable land and can affect adversely Maryland's natural resources. Approximately 5 million tons of CCPs generated in Maryland in the past five years have been placed in landfills, and the annual amount of CCPs requiring land disposal is expected to increase in the future. Thus, PPRP has undertaken an initiative to promote beneficial use of the 1.2 million tons of CCPs generated annually at Maryland's power plants. The overall objective of PPRP's effort is to make potential users, regulators and the public more aware of environmental, technical and economic benefits that can result from replacing raw materials with CCPs. PPRP activities include: disseminating information on the availability, quality and potential environmental effects of CCPs; field studies to determine the environmental effects of high volume CCP uses being implemented in Maryland; and a field demonstration to determine the technical and economic feasibility of a beneficial CCP use application considered to be viable in Maryland. This paper examines the scope and effectiveness of PPRP's efforts to date.