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**GOVERNOR O'MALLEY, CITY LEADERS CELEBRATE  
RESTORATION OF CONTAMINATED MASONVILLE WATERFRONT**  
*Officials Break Ground for Environmental Education Center on Site*

**BALTIMORE, MD (April 21, 2008)** – Governor Martin O'Malley was joined by Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon, community leaders and area elected officials at a ceremony today to break ground on the Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center. The center is part of a \$153 million restoration project that will transform one of Baltimore Harbor's most contaminated sites into an area that will benefit wildlife, local residents, and the port industry.

"This project is a wonderful example of how government and local communities can work together to produce something positive," said Governor O'Malley. "For years, this was an area that was unclean, unkempt, and unsafe. Very soon, it will be a place to learn about the environment, to spot wildlife, and enjoy outdoor recreation using some of our state's beautiful natural resources."

In addition to the education center, the Masonville restoration project will include: a new environmental park and wildlife area; a series of hiker / biker trails that will provide local residents access to the Patapsco River at Masonville Cove; a boat ramp limited to non-power boats including kayaks and canoes; improvements to stream and fish habitat; and, trash interceptors that will keep stormwater runoff trash from entering Baltimore Harbor. Maryland Environmental Service will manage the project.

"I am very excited about the opening of the Masonville Environmental Education Center," remarked Mayor Dixon. "The Chesapeake Bay and the river systems that feed it are some of our most precious assets. This education center will help us teach young people about how the environment affects us, and what we can do to preserve it. I thank the Maryland Department of Transportation and the Maryland Port Administration for creating this wonderful resource."

The MPA has been actively assisted in this project by the Members of the Concerned Citizens for a Better Brooklyn and the Brooklyn-Curtis Bay Coalition. Since the beginning, representatives told the MPA that one of their reasons for supporting this initiative was to show their children the importance of caring for the environment. One key request made by the communities was for easy access to enjoy the waterfront.

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“We are so excited to have reached this stage in the development of this unique urban park,” remarked Carol Eshelman, executive director of the Brooklyn-Curtis Bay Coalition. “The Masonville Cove Nature Center will provide Brooklyn and Curtis Bay residents waterfront access for the first time in decades.”

Last year, the MPA began cleaning up approximately 22 acres of shoreline along the Middle Branch of the Patapsco River. Already, about 30,000 tons of trash and debris have been removed, with about 10,000 additional tons yet to be cleared. Some of the debris dates back more than a century to the Great Baltimore Fire of 1904. To date, the clean-up has included the removal of:

- o 199,947 gallons of petroleum-tainted water;
- o 6,250 tons of timber;
- o 122 tons of concrete rubble; and
- o 2,047 pounds of PCB-containing electrical equipment.

Besides trash, there are also 25 abandoned vessels located in the water at the site. The site is the former home of Kurt Iron and Metal and the Maryland Shipbuilding and Drydock Company.

In December 2007, the Masonville restoration project was awarded the 2007 Mayor’s Business Recognition award by the Greater Baltimore Committee. The award is given annually to organizations that have demonstrated outstanding community service and significantly improved the City of Baltimore.

The Masonville Cove Environmental Education Center will be a “near-zero, net-energy” building. This designation includes using the latest environmental advances to operate the building. Examples of this are using a ground source HVAC system and solar energy power. The center will have many other “green” features incorporated into the design and construction, including fresh air energy recovery, recyclable materials, and efficient building standards with minimal energy input. The center is scheduled to be open to the public by the end of December 2008.

“The Masonville Cove Environmental Center is a great new resource for the Baltimore City Public School System. Our teachers and students can expand their classrooms from four walls to the entire local urban environment,” said Dr. Andres A. Alonso, CEO, Baltimore City Public School System.

Citizens and students from local schools will be the key groups taking advantage of the environmental education center. Living Classrooms Foundation and the National Aquarium in Baltimore will be developing and running the education programs for the center.

“Living Classrooms Foundation is excited to play a key role in the partnership to provide unique, urban environmental education programs that will benefit students across Maryland and the residents of local communities,” said James Piper Bond, president and CEO of Living Classrooms Foundation. “Baltimore City school children will lead many important initiatives that will support their academic learning while improving the environment.”

“The National Aquarium in Baltimore is pleased to partner with the Maryland Port Administration on this project and lead the effort in restoring another part of the city’s wetland,” says David Pittenger, the Aquarium’s executive director. “Wetlands are essential to the vitality of the Chesapeake Bay, and by involving the community in restoration projects that are in their own backyard, people connect with the Bay and develop a vested interest in protecting it for future generations.”

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