Martin O'Malley Governor	Shari T. Wilson Secretary
Anthony G. Brown Lieutenant Governor	Robert M. Summers, Ph.D. Deputy Secretary

March 30, 2010

The Honorable Joan Carter Conway, Chairperson
Members of the Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
Senate Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee
2 West Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21403

      Re: Letter of Information, Senate Bill 1104: Environment- Heating Oil- Sulfur Content

Dear Senator Conway and Committee Members:

The Maryland Department of the Environment supports the concept of SB 1104. Currently, the sulfur levels in home heating oil are four to six times as high as the 500 ppm level SB 1104 seeks to implement. These high sulfur levels contribute significantly to fine particle pollution, lower visibility, and increase CO_2 in the atmosphere. Lower levels of sulfur in heating oil will help the State meet Clean Air Act requirements and improve air quality for Maryland citizens. Although fuel prices may rise slightly, the lower sulfur content will sustain higher efficiency levels in furnaces longer reducing maintenance costs and prolonging the life of home heating equipment.

The Department is moving ahead with a regulation containing requirements identical to the proposed legislation, as are a number of other states in the east. As a result, this legislation would be duplicative of action the Department is undertaking. The Department's plan for low sulfur heating oil requirements would be in place in 2011 and implemented in 2014.

Thank you for your consideration of this information as you review SB 1104. Please contact me at 410-260-6301 or lnissley@mde.state.md.us if you would like to discuss any of these issues further.

Sincerely,

Lisa Nissley

Lisa Nissley

Cc: George (Tad) S. Aburn, Jr., Director, Air and Radiation Management Administration
        Heather Barthel, Director, Legislation and Policy