

“NAACP TO ASK ATTORNEY GENERAL TO INTERVENE”

The Worcester County Branch NAACP called upon the Maryland Coastal Bays Policy Committee (MCB), December 12, 2008, at their annual meeting in Ocean City, not to set aside the *Minority Outreach and Involvement Strategy Project* and replace it with a proposed *Minority Advisory Committee*. But, notwithstanding the NAACP recommendation was defeated.

Edward S. Lee, Branch President, said, “I am troubled that in an unprecedented move the MCB Policy Committee changed its voting procedures from reaching decisions by consensus... Changing the voting rules when it comes to decision making for the African-American and minority community is more than questionable, it is unacceptable!

The Chair of the Policy Committee, Secretary John R. Griffin, Maryland Department of Natural Resources, demanded a head count after a consensus was not reached in favor of the proposed Minority Advisory Committee... the Worcester County Commissioners and one other member of the Policy Committee voted against the motion.”

In a prepared statement to Secretary Griffin, Lee reminded the Secretary that “the Worcester NAACP and the Maryland State Conference NAACP met with you on August 21, 2008, in Pocomoke City to discuss the issue of the Minority Outreach and Involvement Strategy Project and the Worcester NAACP’S role with regard to the Maryland Coastal Bays Policy Committee. At the conclusion of our meeting it was agreed that you would consider the following items and respond to the Maryland State Conference NAACP:

- Employ the services of an outside consultant to evaluate the “Minority Outreach and Involvement Strategy” to determine its progress and make recommendations for institutionalizing the project “since an objective internal evaluation could not be done”.
- Consider recommending to the Maryland Coastal Bays (MCB) Policy Committee, that the NAACP be seated as a member of that Policy Committee.
- That the persons of color, being considered for appointment to the Coastal Bay’s Board of Directors, “...be vetted” by the local NAACP Branch.

To date, neither the Worcester NAACP nor the Maryland State Conference NAACP has received any correspondence from you in this regard.”

In his prepared statement, Lee said “We are left in the unfortunate position of wondering whether what appears to be your decision not to respond to agreed concerns during our meeting, means that progress in not being made in closing the ***minority involvement gap*** as it relates to policy and decision making in the Maryland Coastal Bays Program.”

Lee charged that "... by not responding to us, it seems that you are terminating the forward thinking and planning progress that is embodied in the work of the "Minority Outreach and Involvement Strategy Committee".

Lee advised the Secretary that, "...the driving force behind the economy in Worcester County is the Atlantic Ocean, and its bays and tributaries. Policies that are implemented and decisions made regarding these bodies of water directly impact other planning and decision making related to tourism and recreation, land use, commercial development, set asides, jobs, housing, education, as well as other economic and quality of life issues that impact the lives of the citizens in Worcester County. This is particularly true of those of color and low economic means."

The Branch President said, "It is our belief that the African-American and minority community for far too long have not been consulted and informed regarding issues that directly impact their lives, their children and the community as a whole...The Worcester NAACP would be remiss if it did not act to halt these discriminatory and exclusionary practices... the Worcester NAACP find it necessary to ask the Maryland State Conference NAACP to send a formal request of intercession to the Maryland Attorney General for that Office's intervention concerning this matter."

In his recommendation to the Policy Committee, Lee said, "...we believe that it would be prudent, not to displace the Minority Outreach and Involvement Strategy Committee and that the issue should be stayed at this time so the intervention of a third party may be sought. It seems that any action taken to install the proposed Minority Advisory Committee will only exacerbate and complicate matters ...experimenting with our children, on the job training (OJT) and creating programs to pay staff salaries is not "Minority ...Involvement according to the NAACP Strategy. "