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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Maryland Nutrient Trading Program Recognized for Advancing Water Quality *Program one of four nationwide selected for recognition*

ANNAPOLIS, MD (Nov. 6, 2013) – Maryland’s Nutrient Trading Program, administered by the Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) and the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), is one of four programs nationwide that was nominated for a Growing Blue Award during the American Water Summit in Washington, D.C. last night at a gala event attended by approximately 350 people.

The Growing Blue Award recognizes individuals, organizations and government entities for advancing public understanding of how water is as essential to economic and social growth as it is to sustaining the environment. Neither MDA nor MDE submitted the Nutrient Trading Program for consideration but was instead nominated by Global Water Intelligence, which tracks major global water projects and trends. The Nutrient Trading Program was recognized for incentivizing conservation, promoting growth, and protecting the Chesapeake Bay.

“We are very pleased to receive this unexpected recognition,” said Agriculture Secretary Buddy Hance. “We know that as we move forward with our Bay Restoration efforts we will have to become more creative. The Nutrient Trading Program is a voluntary, market based approach that we believe will help us reach our long-term goals.”

The Nutrient Trading Program provides farmers with credits for implementing conservation measures that reduce nitrogen or phosphorous runoff beyond the farm’s baseline requirements. Farmers can then sell those credits to other entities that are required to reduce their impact on the Chesapeake Bay but have not yet done so. The price of the credit is determined by the buyer and seller. The heart of the trading program is a complex, online calculation tool that lets the farmer assess his farm and determine its baseline compliance and credit generating capacity. MDA and MDE provide the infrastructure to facilitate trading, but the state does not put projects together or transact trades. For more about the program, see: www.mdnutrienttrading.com.

“We are happy to have our joint program included among such an outstanding group of nominees,” said MDE Deputy Secretary David Costello. “Nutrient trading is an innovative approach to water quality issues that holds the promise of lowering pollution reduction costs while accelerating efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay.”

Susan Payne, program coordinator for MDA Ecosystem Markets, represented the program at the American Water Summit’s gala dinner and introduced a brief 6 minute video that described how the program works. Watch the video here <http://youtu.be/hB2hAAA9bNc>.

The award winner was South Florida Water Management District for their ALT4R plan to protect the Everglades. Additional nominees were Blue Legacy for its grass-root efforts to raise public awareness in water protection and management and Molson Coors for improving social and environmental integrity in Colorado’s Clear Creek Watershed.

This is the second year of the Growing Blue Award. *Growing Blue* was created to increase global awareness of water challenges and to act as a catalyst and platform for the exploration and implementation of informed and thoughtful responses. For more information, see <http://growingblue.com>.

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