

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

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**MARYLAND STATE SENATOR
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
ENVIRONMENTAL LEADER**

LAND USE PLANNING IN CALVERT COUNTY

**INTERVIEWED BY RANDI VOGT
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Randi: My name is Randi Vogt. My husband and I moved to Calvert County in 1969 and we already saw change starting to happen and became interested in what was happening. I joined the League of Women Voters and was named the Land Use chairman. Didn't know what land use was and as part of my education I teamed up with a video tape expert at the time and we did a video tape interviewing local officials. I contacted Bernie and Judge Bowen, all the elected officials at the time and was granted interviews. That's how I first met Bernie, by interviewing him. I was very struck by the fact that when he talked about the difficulties of dealing with all these different perspectives, are always in a community that first of all, he was respectful of all of them. He wasn't disparaging of any particular viewpoint. The second is that he was a problem solver, in my mind was the best sense of that. He wanted to go out, get information. He wanted to get opinions from people and then he took a course of action. I remember one day, in particular, we were out in front of what was then the library on the sidewalk. I ran into you and you started talking about this pleasant peninsula plan and how you wanted everyone to get involved.

I thought, this is the way government is supposed to be. I was just 22 years old. I was very new to government. To have a county commissioner, the president of the county commissioners, coming and asking me to participate, and seeing how he was asking everyone else to participate, whoever they were, I was, that's when I believed in the power of local government. It's what led me to go back to college and get a degree in land use planning and eventually become a staff member in the department of planning and zoning at the time. I always believed when you follow that process that Bernie laid out of listening and researching and then exploring options and then coming to a solution, I thought that's the way government is supposed to work. Bernie really had a very powerful influence on the whole direction of my life from that. Not least of all, he appointed me to the housing authority early on and the planning commission. Those were wonderful experiences for me. Thank you, Bernie.

Bernie you're best known for the work that you've done to protect the water quality of the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay but what's much less known is the work that you've done to protect the overall quality of Calvert County. You served as chairman of the board of county commissioners for 12 years during a critical period in the county's history. And not all that long before you took office in 1970 things had been pretty settled and for decades there was an established way of life that had its roots in the mid to late 1600s. Statistically the county looked poor but culturally it had a long and rich tradition based on tobacco farming

and working the water. Then things started to change quickly. That's what I'd like you to talk about in this interview. First of all in the early days, what was Calvert County like when you were growing up and up until the mid to late 60s, I remember when I interviewed you 40 years ago I asked you a similar question. I asked you was life more pleasant now than it had been in the past and you had a very interesting answer to that. I'd like to hear what you think about it today.

EARLIER LIFE IN CALVERT COUNTY

Bernie: Yes, Calvert County was quite different. See, I was born in 1924 and started the school in 1929 in a one-room school in Island Creek. The lifestyle has changed so dramatically it's unbelievable, as has the landscape, as has the quality of life and certainly the quality of our environment. Back then Calvert County was. . . very little known about Calvert County. There was Broome's Island, where I grew up and since there was about 150 homes and my best recollection, it was only about six automobiles. They used to carpool people, the automotive owners were kind enough to use their own transportation. If you wanted to see a doctor you had to go to Prince Frederick for some reason, you could always depend on your neighbor that had a car to take you up there. It was very subtle life and yet it was a happy life. There was no electricity. There was no television obviously. Very, very few radios and no indoor plumbing. It was a crude way to live but if you're born into an environment, that's the situation. You really haven't seen the other side, so you don't miss it because you haven't experienced it. It was a rare occasion to ever get off Broome's Island for anything.

I know my first trip to Washington, DC, which happened in 1942, I believe it was. I went to Washington to go to work and I graduated from high school at the age of 16, then went up to the big city. Very lonely at first and even kind of sad because families were so close knit in those days. When someone left home for whatever the reason, my sister was first, she went away to nurse's training and when she left it was like a funeral. Everybody cried because you just weren't away from each other. Everybody slept in the same building at night time. No absentees. There were things that I remember as a child growing up that will forever be pleasant memories for me. One that I could think of was that the Warren Denton Oyster House on Broomes Island, that was the hub of industry if you please because Denton Oyster House bought crabs, fish, oysters, whatever came out of that river he would buy it from the people who harvest it and haul it into Baltimore somewhere, sell it. That was the way of life. The one thing I remember so much about the Oyster House is that

he employed about 135 shuckers. It's really probably one of the largest operations on the east coast.

He had the A&P contract, he shipped oysters all out west, freighted them out but the thing that I remember most about that Oyster House is he had 135 shuckers and as the day wore on and it was getting time for them to quit, go home, most of them had to walk. Somebody would start singing and then somebody else would join in and shortly that whole Oyster House was just a big room of melody. They sang the old Negro spirituals and some of the hymns. It was an experience that I wouldn't trade but that's a part of our culture, our history that's been lost and lost forever because recording that in those days was next to impossible. Just no way to do it. It's something that certainly lasts forever with you and it's a warm feeling you have every time you reflect back on those days.

In those days there were only about four doctors in the county. I remember well when Dr. (Page) Jett came to the county. He was like the emperor coming to town or the king or the president, somebody coming to town because doctors were so scarce. Dr. Jett along with the rest of the doctors, they're all country doctors but they did a good job. All house calls, you rarely ever went to the doctor's office. They drove to your home and saw the patient and drive back. That's the way life was then.

I recall so vividly one part of that when I first started school. I went to a one room school. There were four siblings. My sister being the oldest in the school. We had them in the first, second, third, fourth grade. I was in the first grade. I remember the first day I went in that school. This little school teacher, who at that time was Ms. Ireland. She later became, years later, became Mrs. Gray. She got married. I remember when I walked in that school that day, I was a little apprehensive, but she made me feel so comfortable. It was just a warm feeling and from that moment on I loved school. I never dreaded to go to school because she made me feel like I was an important part of the whole institution so to speak. I did real well under her tutorship or under her teaching. She taught all four grades and we had some people that became fairly noted in that school. Dr. Briscoe, who was a noted pediatrician in Annapolis. Very popular, well noted and well respected.

We had Wallace Ross, who was a professor in education, taught at the University of Georgia for years. Just a wonderful person. The list goes on. It was a sparse education, but they got the basics they needed to succeed. I loved it. Activities, you'd go in school and about mid morning they'd ring the bell and you'd run outside, you'd play for ten minutes. The bell would ring, and you'd go back inside and then lunch time you got

another break. That was a little long. I think that was about 20 minutes. You'd go out and you'd play dodge ball, or we'd play fox and hounds, whatever we wanted to do, after you had your lunch. It was strange because we actually had, in the morning we'd get up there early and the black kids would be there. Of course, the schools were completely segregated. Black kids were there, and they'd be playing ball with us, the older boys that is. When it was time for them to go to school and the bell rang, they'd take off, go to the black school, and there we were at the all-white school. It never dawned on you that young that it was wrong. It was a way of life. Our country has had some imperfections and that was one of them. Thank god we were able to get it changed.

For a couple of hundred years that was the way life was. Calvert had a lot of good amenities. Our water quality was excellent those days. The air was so pure. Just a wonderful atmosphere and a wonderful environment to be brought up in as a child. Crime was unheard of. I think we had a sheriff, that's about all we had. One state trooper and one sheriff in the whole county. There was no need for it because of people had certain standards they lived by and they took them seriously. If you did something wrong rest assured before you'd get home that information would be given to your mother and father and you'd have to answer to them. It was very slow, it was you farmed or you worked the water. May have been a couple car garages, automobile garages, stuff like that but there was very limited business. I guess Goldstein Stores, one of the oldest ones, Mr. Goldstein came here as a peddler and finally booked a building in Prince Frederick. That's a long story, one of its own. That was the hub of the shopping centers. When you needed something, you went to Goldstein Store in Prince Frederick.

That's a real quick summary of the kind of way we lived in those days. We didn't mind not having electricity. You just lit the kerosene lamps. Mother always encouraged us to do our homework before the sun went down because you could see pretty well. After you got done with your chores you could do your homework. We made it, and none the worse for the wear. A lot of good memories. A lot of hard work in those days. That's the early part of Calvert County. All the roads were undone, unsurfaced. They were all dirt roads, gravel roads. Washboards, didn't make any difference because it was very limited automobiles, wasn't like you needed a beltway to travel on.

Randi: We can jump to the, I guess it would be the mid to late 60s when things started to change quite a bit. There was a dualization of Route Four. Talk about the nuclear power plant, the mobile home controversy. There

were a lot of things going on that changed. What were your reactions to that and leading up to your decision to run for county commissioner?

SLOT MACHINES AND DEVELOPMENT

Bernie: We leave the slow, laid-back, subtle days of yesteryear and kind of fast forward to some activities that took place really during the 60s. Give you a little history of what was going on just before that, Calvert County, Saint Mary's and Charles County, operated illegal slot machines. They had them in grocery stores, Broome's Island, as small as it was, they had five grocery stores. A lot of the money that they made came from the slot machines. They got people playing the slot machines. Then we found the time when the powers thought they could get them legalized and indeed they did. They got them legalized in southern Maryland. Then a later date, that became unacceptable to the governing office at that that time, who was Governor Tawes, he was from I think he came from either Cambridge or Crisfield on the Eastern Shore. He had set a goal to rid the state of the slot machines. Eventually they did. They made them illegal and outlawed, the nullified the earlier law. Before they were legalized, they had slot machines and it was rather, well almost funny the way it would operate because when the grand jury was sworn in the slot machines would disappear. They would stay hidden somewhere until after the grand jury was excused then the slot machines would come back again.

Tawes had pretty much decided, he and a lot of his folks, that they were going to rid Maryland of slot machines. They ended up doing that. Doing that, he had a little bit of passion for southern Maryland and the governor said he'd like to do some things that should be beneficial economically for southern Maryland in the absence of slot machines. He promised them a bridge, the Benedict Bridge and the Bridge at Solomon. He promised the completion of Route 2/4 dualization all the way down. Then he had the legislature pass a law creating the tri-county council, which was a regional group of people composed of the elected officials in the three counties. Their goal was to bring the three counties together. Very neighborly, and to try to plan so that one county would benefit the other. It was very helpful. Didn't cure all the ills but it was very helpful. Those of us that, well, we liked to think we were a little visionary. We see this thing coming and you've got dualization of Route 2/4 all the way from Huntington all the way to Solomon. Got a bridge connecting Saint Mary's and Calvert County together.

The Benedict Bridge had been built then and so the access was there. Then along with that there was the effort on the part of Baltimore Gas

and Electric to build the nuclear power plant. Frankly there was very little opposition to it locally. We had some people from outside the area that were very opposed to it and they fought it very hard. Ultimately it was passed and established. Then you had to be an ostrich with your head in the sand not to see that all of these amenities were going to make a big difference on Calvert's lifestyle. For instance, we knew when you dualized the road you've got the bridge, you've got the nuclear power plant jobs. It was cheap land, a great place to live. We knew that people would be coming in. Low taxes and so it was certainly a burning consideration that we had and a handful of us never lost sight of that.

My first, I guess, experience in public life, except I was scout master for four years and president of the Prince Frederick PTA for several years, but other than that I decided I wanted to get involved so I got appointed to the school board, Calvert County school board in 1963 and served until 1969. That gave me an opportunity to start building a base to really be a part of some kind of authority that would set direction for the county because we knew it was coming and what some of us saw wasn't a pretty picture. We didn't have any subdivision regulations. We had very limited building inspections, road specifications, the kind of things that you have to have in order to control the quality of the growth you have was absent. After going through the board of education and getting very familiar with the county in every way and all parts of the county, the education system was one of the worst in the state of Maryland. Our county was the second poorest subdivision in the state of Maryland, but we knew with the advent of the nuclear power plant and the kind of money that was going to bring that things would not be the same. That there's opportunity to do some things that really needed to be done.

For instance, in health, public safety, environment and all these things that were absolutely, woefully inadequate, we knew that had to be done in order to bring orderly growth and bring growth that didn't bring a wave of problems with it. After the experience on the school board, after six years, appointments in those days were six years. Now they're elected and I think they serve four years. It was a great experience for me because often people would ask me well, you became a county commissioner later on. How in the world could you stand it, how could you tolerate that? People always banging on you, I said when you serve six years on the board of education and you went through the complete desegregation of schools you were ready for anything but another World War III. That was a great experience for me, and I had a wonderful person that. It was Mr. (Maurice) Dunkle, superintendent of schools. First class gentleman, very bright man. Very humble. He'd get tough when he had

to, but I learned a lot from him. I had great respect for him. We were very close friends.

As the system began to grow a little bit, with our encouragement, I began to become fully aware of what the potential this county was. We had this notion that hey, we can do these things. We're going to have growth, growth's going to come but we can have good schools. We can have a good hospital. We can have public safety, we can have recreation. We can have all these things because we're going to have the revenue source to do this. At the same time, if we set a plan in place that would establish criteria that we had to live by, and construct by, Calvert would be a better place to live. We never lost sight of that. There were quite a few people involved in that.

Randi: That really was an unusual perspective back then. There were a lot of people who said money's coming, let development come as it may. I still don't know where that came from, where that idea of planning...

Bernie: Well, there at the...

Randi: Was there a group of you?

FIRST POLITICAL CAMPAIGN

Bernie: They had set a plan in motion in 1965 I believe, around that time. That was the first zoning. People were very heavily opposed to it but the board of county commissioners knew they were not going to run again and they were wise enough to know that something had to be done because we're going to grow. Even in those days while their plan was inadequate at best, at least they established the theme of zoning, which put the wheels in motion. After the 60s passed, I decided in 1969 there were a lot of pressing issues in this county that really troubled me. The river in 1969 began to show real signs of deterioration and so the way the river goes so goes the Bay. We knew it wasn't isolated here in the Patuxent River. We knew it was, the whole Bay was in trouble and tried very desperately to get people to listen, but they just were not taking it seriously. They were not taking it seriously. I had some of the older folks telling me oh it's cyclical, it'll be all right. A few years like this it'll come right back.

But there was a strange feeling I had about the absence of the grass and all the other things. That was one of the reasons and I was not happy and I say this kindly, was not happy with the closed door system of government we had in those days. I campaigned on table top government. If people elected, you people have a right to know what

you're doing. Anyway, I decided I'd run, and I was swamped with people trying to tell me not to run because they had already picked the people they wanted to be the next county commissioners. I recall one night after I made the decision to file, they came around to where the sheriff's office is now, it was old Calvert House, and told me we'll make you chairman of the Democratic Central Committee. That'll give you some time, get you some experience if you don't run this time. I said well, it sounds like you're afraid of me or something, but I've made up my mind and win, lose or draw ... I said if you want me out, you're going to have to beat me at the polls. I'm cutting a deal with nobody. I've got some things on my mind. I want to make sure they come to fruition.

They walked sharply away and that was the end of that. I ran for county commissioner in 1970 and was successful and subsequently ran for two more terms through 1982, from 70 to 1982. Now you are County Commissioner. We had some pretty good teams of work, Commissioner Truman and Dr. George Weems from the first district. We worked together. There were times when we had little controversy but on the big issues, I think everybody had insight enough to know we can't stay like we are and if we're going to grow we need to grow in such a way that it doesn't turn the county into a haphazard lifestyle.

PLEASANT PENINSULA PLAN

That's when we decided to go with the big plan, which later became known as the Pleasant Peninsula Plan. I don't know whether it was Judge Rymer or whether it was his wife Gracie but one of them came up with that. I credited them both but we thought it was a great title and we called it the Pleasant Peninsula Plan. The PPP. That was the first order of business after we were sworn in to the County Commissioner's office on December 4, 1970.

First thing was to survey what we had in house, find out whether they need more personnel, where our weaknesses were, our strengths, and let's work together just as though you're running your own home. Let's bring the people involved in this and see if we can't get something going that makes sense for Calvert County. It was different ideas that people would suggest but we finally ended up with three teams. I happened to be one of them, Judge Rymer was one and Jack Williams is the other. We presented to the 72 organizations at that time in Calvert County. What we called the procedures for the Pleasant Peninsula Plan and we recruited about 400 volunteers because again, if you want people to do something, people like to be asked. Volunteers sometimes works, we're blessed with the volunteers we have in this county. But if you've got a

tough situation, want to get the job done, you really need to buttonhole people, let them know what you're about and make them feel that they need to be a part of it. The first things we did is first I wanted to change the order of operations, so I got the other two commissioners to agree to have a volunteer of the Minister Association to come in, offer prayer before each meeting and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Secondly, it was a two to one vote on this. I wanted to set up some kind of recording device to record all the meetings of the county commissioners. We didn't have the video then, but we did have the audio. All of the tapes were put in a safe keeping place for posterity. Even today you can go to the courthouse and pull those tapes out from my early days in the early 1970s and listen to the County Commissioners meetings. Who said what and why. It was a different atmosphere to work under, but it was a good one because we always had people in the hearing room. We never allowed them to interrupt the meetings. I did not serve as president for nine consecutive years and I made sure that we ran the ship smoothly. Not unkind to anybody but I didn't want people popping up and down in the meeting. We established early rules. We used Robert's Rules of Order. I read the book several times so I knew I was pretty well informed on it. That's really how we got rolling and getting the general public involved in Calvert County into it. We broke them down into 12 different committees and then we declared a moratorium.

MORATORIUM ON SUBDIVISIONS

After appropriately advertising, you know what we're doing, we declared a moratorium on subdivision of land because requests for subdivisions is coming in right and left. They knew something was going to happen and they'd want to get in before we had all these rules and regulations. We did grandfather one in. That was Ed Apple, they were building some houses and he did have his plans in. They had been pretty much approved by the planning commission at that time. Not Ed Apple, his name was Apple though wasn't it?

Randi: It was Apple, yes.

Bernie: He had just had a little subdivision so we grandfathered him in and he was happy and everybody else, some of them are very disgruntled but the majority of the people are very happy because they could see it was so public. And we had a new paper that came into being, The Recorder, started by Charley Molitor and he said that his reporter stayed in that hearing room. Reported everything front page all the time. That was

really a big asset to us. No longer did we have to depend on word of mouth. We had a newspaper that was going to get the word out. It was really a godsend for Calvert County. You can't operate in a vacuum. I don't care how small or how large you are. You've got to be open, transparent, and when you do that you're walking a real safe road because most of the time there are brainy people out there and if you listen to what they're saying you could go intellectually and you can do the right thing ultimately. That's really, I guess, was the overriding objective was to simply, three words, do what's right. That's what is right if you do what's right. We finally got the moratorium in place, nobody could subdivide any more land. We kept it there until the Pleasant Peninsula Plan was totally complete.

We had professional planners as you know that put the plan together. It came out when we took our final tally before the plan was approved at public hearing, there was very little objection to it. Very limited objection to it because even those who were in the building business could see that this was the right thing to do. We're going to get better homes, we're going to get better roads. We had roads when we took office that an ambulance couldn't get in there and school buses couldn't get into the subdivision. We paved, we had to gravel and pave about 56 miles of roads that were untravelable so that school buses could get in 50 kids out, ambulance could get into someone if someone was taken ill. We did all of that and I think people saw what was happening. They didn't have any objection to it. If they did it was very minimal because we made some very, very strong moves in those first four years and I had people that suggested to me that was, I think a little greedy. You'll never get elected again but I led the ticket that year.

EARLY PLANNING SUCCESS

I had already made up my mind that if the people in Calvert County don't like my style, don't like my leadership, they have a way to correct it in four years. Every November you can do what you want to do. If they want a Hoboken, New Jersey, in Calvert County I don't want to serve them anyway. I can tell you the reception that I got was overwhelming. It was one of the finest journeys of my life going through that period. People were so good to me and so supportive. I look back over it and there's not many regrets. We're all imperfect but not many regrets. We can look back with a sense of pride on how the growth came because we have had some very wonderful people migrate to Calvert County. They are really community minded people. They've contributed great deals to our school system. They're very helpful in community organizations and I would say that, I don't want to sound like Long Island, New York, but if

you're going to have growth you ought to get the best growth you can get. I think that's what Calvert County did. I don't think there's any need for anyone to be apologetic about it. I think it's the right thing to do then. It's still the right thing to do.

I guess my hope and prayer is as the executive body changes in Calvert County that they won't chop that part of their memory off and forget it. I'd like to see continuity that kind of thinking infinite because we can still maintain a healthy lifestyle in Calvert County if we don't get too rambunctious and don't get too greedy. The problem with the day to day, the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries today is simply greed.

IMPACTS OF GROWTH

We have not kept pace with the kind of things we should have done with growth. We had I think about 55,000 people back in the early days in the whole Patuxent River watershed. Today I think it's about three quarters of a million people that live there and most of the waste, most of human waste, ends up going into wastewater treatment plants, from there into the fluid goes into streams, into the river, into the bay. We've got a long ways to go environmentally to clean out Chesapeake Bay. It would be an unpardonable catastrophe if we don't continue. Never give up, continue on and never allow ourselves to become too disappointed, too discouraged. That is not an option for me I can assure you. I hope that represents most of the good thinking people in this county.

You can have everything in the world, the biggest bank account, the largest car, the biggest home and all of that but when you get a little nearer to the sunset of your life you look back over your shoulder. Hopefully you'll see a wake of things behind that really helped make this a better place to live and in the absence of that I think you leave this world with a conscious full of hypocrisy because you didn't do what you should've done. I appeal to all of the folks that followed me and those that will follow others. Never lose sight of the fact that there's not anything more important than clean air and clean water. Money, you can't buy those things. We really need to jump start that theory and get it rolling again. I don't know how we can do it but there's got to be a way. There's some smart thinkers out there. There's got to be a way that we can remold and remake and begin to take this day seriously from a dramatic standpoint. It isn't just the aquatic life that we lose out there and the economic engines out there. I can't even predict a figure that would be appropriate if you could clean that bay up back to the 1950s. The productivity we had then has billions of billions of dollars that could be made. There's a good job market there.

All of that's gone right now. There's some nice things happening but it isn't happening fast enough. I often say that the only thing I want to see, I don't expect to live long enough to see the bay cleaned up. I thought in the beginning some 45 years ago that we would be able to clean the bay up in 10 or 20 years. I think if we would have put our shoulders to the wheel and made the investments and set the restrictions in place that we need to make sure that we don't eradicate the good stuff simply for one word and that's greed. Five letters. GREED.

Randi: I wonder, when you talk about how you got the community behind this plan it makes it sound like everybody was so happy about it all and followed you. There was a lot of controversy, wasn't there? There were a lot of people who were very opposed to what you were doing.

Bernie: To suggest that we were able to accomplish some things, particularly the growth issue, and other things that were appropriate, we needed the amenities. If you're going to grow we knew that we needed a good hospital. We needed a good school system. If somebody's going to move to a county and they are intellectually equipped and they love their family, they're going to ask questions before the move. How's your school system? What about if my family gets sick, what's the health situation down there? How's your hospital doing? Is it safe for my wife to go to the grocery store? What's the crime down there? They're going to ask all the pertinent questions.

We tried to ask those questions. We tried to establish the kind of things that would assure that the right answer would go back to these people, whoever they are. I think we've been successful but it didn't happen without some controversy because when people who don't have vision, or don't want vision, they're looking for today and tomorrow. They're not looking 20 years, 40 years, 50 years down the road. You're going to have trouble with them because their minds are made up. I want to make a million dollars this year and I'm not concerned about next year.

There are a number of those people that are still around and a number of them that are still trying to make this a hub of productivity so that their billion dollars will become two billion. I know I'm repeating myself but that's very secondary when your life grows short. Becomes very secondary in your memory. You want to make sure that you do something to give back to the community so that people that you leave behind will have good thoughts about you even years after you're gone.

Randi: Here you were the county commissioner out there at meetings, talking about the plan. I've never seen any commissioners after that doing that.

They sent planning staff out to do it. But you were very hands on. I guess that was just part of your philosophy about how to get things done?

GOVERNING APPROACH AND PHILOSOPHY

Bernie: I always felt when I was in public office that that's the people's office. I'm their representative, I'm their figure head, I'm their mouthpiece. I ought to be doing things that replicate what they want me to do. They're the ones that voted for me. I never lost sight of that at all. I would hope that idea would be resurrected so that ... one of the things I admitted telling you was that initially I suggested to the County Commissioners, the two members and they agreed, I would like to appoint a citizen's advisory committee that would entail all walks of life from all sectors of the county. Again, that would be something that would not be political appointments as such. How do you do it?

My suggestion was to write to all the business, civic citizens organizations, ask them to send us three names in. We'll appoint 25 people. We'll let the secretary, let him make a chart. The secretary did make a chart. As the names came in from a number of organizations she put the names down. Then if they were on several organizations, like if they were a member of the Lion's Club and they were a member of the League of Women's Voters and a member of something else, it gave them three stars. We may have picked just the three stars. I didn't pick them nor did the other two commissioners. The secretary put the chart together and then told us who the eligible candidates were.

In one instance I did go out on my own and recruit people because we did not have representation from the black community. I went out and handpicked people in the black community that I knew they were civic leaders, they were community leaders. They were good people and people that loved Calvert County but for some reason or another they got dropped out of the loop. We ended up with a number of blacks on there. Every issue that came up in Calvert County, before we discussed it publicly, went to this committee. The first meeting we had I was able to talk the governor into loaning us his yacht to take them all out on the governor's yacht. We went to Saint Michaels, had dinner over there but we had a meeting aboard the yacht. I explained the whole process. Now, what we want you to do, when we have an idea we're going to present it to you. We want you to go back to your organization, Lion's Club, Rotary Club, Kiwanis, whatever it is, church, civic. Talk to them about it.

Then the next time that we meet we want you to give us the feedback. Is it good, bad or indifferent? Most of the times that's the way it happened.

It wasn't treated lightly. They were very important people. They were people that had a record of doing things right and wanting things done right. We had a few people that were on the other side but that's the way you deal with it. That citizens advisory commission was a great sounding board. Some ideas we had we put before them, they thought it wasn't a good idea, it died. We didn't push it any further.

Randi: When you were working on the Pleasant Peninsula Plan there were some major issues like land use, the environment, agriculture. Were there any in particular that stuck out in your mind as being ... I suppose you would say the environment.

NEW FUNDING SOURCES

Bernie: I think because of the people that were involved and they had certain receptivity to what we were doing. I think because of them and most of those people were trusted in the community, that the opposition ... for instance, in the agriculture preservation, that was a hot button. Three of us met. Bill Geysler, Greg Boyd and myself. We'd go to Maryland Tobacco Growers Association, we'd meet four or five farmers and we went to the farmers and tell them what we're trying to do. We're trying to save agriculture land in Calvert County but we don't want to save it at the price of demeaning your investment. That was the reason for the TDRs and all that came on later on. Wherever you saw a little fire smoldering, you dealt with that. You didn't ignore it and wait until it got into a public hearing where you had a little bit of chaos and I think it was because the way that everything was handled. For instance, my first budget in 1970, if I recall it correctly, was about \$4 million. The first check that I got from Baltimore Gas and Electric in 1975 was for \$7.5 million.

Not too many years later we got a check for \$13 million. We knew when we put that plan together and it called for recreational parks in each district, we'd call for a new hospital. We'd call for an expanded public safety sheriff's department, marked cars. We knew that we would have the money to take care of that. It was the right thing to do. While there was a group of taxpayers who's led by one of the public officials that was highly respected in the county here didn't agree with the Pleasant Peninsula Plan at all, but the idea that they had was we can drop taxes down to \$1. We could have, there's no question about it but you can see by dropping the tax rate you would be pulling people in hand over fist and we weren't ready for that. We stayed the course on the tax. I did at one time try to give them a tax break. The way I interpreted Article 25 we had the authority to do it. What it simply did was she gave everybody in Calvert County including the industry, business and all that's included

BG&E, \$1000 tax break. \$1000 and it had very little impact on the total revenues coming in at that time, but it did show that we were in good faith about it.

That was challenged in court. It was upheld in lower courts but when it took to the Court of Appeals we lost that. That's one of the minor disappointments that I had. It was an attempt to accommodate those that were screaming you need to do something about taxes. At the same time, not erode the revenue because we had the liability here in the nuclear power plant. It seemed thoughtless to create a situation where we cut their taxes in half. You're talking about billions and billions of dollars, then the tax burden would at a later date would have to come on real estate tax. You'd have to raise taxes again. Anyway, that was an interesting part of it.

Randi: You received and the county received a national award. You went to Hawaii and got all kinds of kudos for this. Tell a little bit about that because that really set Calvert County apart, that planning process.

NATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR COUNTY PLANNING

Bernie: We were very humbled by that. To this day I think back over it and because of the contributions that the people in this county made, the people that made me, it's a very humbling experience when you think little old Calvert County not too many years ago was unheard of. Now we're getting a national award because we have created a planning procedure that had never been tried and tested before. We had nothing but complete success with it. We got a national award with it and I got a big long letter complimenting me on it. They were going to present an award and it would be in Honolulu in Hawaii. I'd been to Hawaii a couple of times when I was going overseas during the war, we stopped over there a few days. Then coming back they stopped us off at Waikiki Beach. We kind of swam around the water there and got humanized for awhile, for about a week, and then they brought us back to the states which was a good thing to do because the environment you experience over there and the sights you see is something that needs to be tempered before you bring that back home with you.

The trip to Hawaii, someone proposed that the county pay for the trip. I said well, if the county pays for it, it will pay for it without my vote. Since I'm affected I am not going to vote for it. That meant the other two commissioners had to vote. One other commissioner would not vote for it. So I paid my way down and back. Paid for my lodging, everything there. I was happy to do it. At a later date, I believe it was the League of

Women's Voters or some organization got together and reimbursed me for most of the money that I spent on it because they thought it was unfair. This was quite an honor for the county and yet here I am paying for my trip. You know, all during our 12 years we never had lunch on the county. We went out and bought our own lunch. Now they have lunches catered in. It's changing, I guess. Procedural change. There's nothing wrong about it. It's the right thing to do. We just decided we could afford to buy our lunch. We didn't need the county. You have to eat lunch if you're at home right?

Randi: The plan was a total success. The process was a success and then it came to implementation and there was a period of time after the plan was adopted when there was still a lot rezoning requests come up. When I read back on how that evolved, for awhile the planning commission would recommend against a rezoning. The board would, this was before your term actually, before they would approve the rezoning and after the Pleasant Peninsula Plan it looked like it was headed in the same direction but you really stood firm against approving a lot of these rezoning. I know Tom Rymer worked very hard on that, but had you not followed up on the plan itself and what it called for we would have had strict commercial development all up and down the floor I believe. That must have been tough for you to make those calls.

Bernie: I looked at the Pleasant Peninsula Plan and I compared it to road map. Now we have GPS and all that good stuff but remember, we used to use paper road maps. That's how we traveled. If I were going to take a trip to Fort Myers, Florida, or West Palm Beach, Florida, I'd get my old maps out, the east coast and I'd follow that map religiously. That's how I got there.

That's what I did with the Pleasant Peninsula Plan. It established certain criteria to live by and to take action by. That's just like a road map. I followed that. I remember one time I felt so sorry for this person. I won't mention any names. It was so sincere when he came in and I said you know, my heart tells me to vote for this. As soon as I voted for it, it wasn't six months later until he had sold the product for a big sum of money and moved out of the county. That'll never happen again as long as I'm in public office. My heart will lead me but when it comes to things that contradict that plan I'm going to stand tall in the saddle and I'll take my licks. I'm just not going to compromise.

There was some big people that wanted zoning. I mean, some powerful people who wanted zoning. I never voted for it. Some of it got through but it got through without my vote. I just think that nothing is perfect. The plan itself was not perfect but it was a darn good benchmark to go by

and I tried to keep myself educated to the fact look, you're a big part of getting this going.

This plan has meant a lot to the county. This is no time to get weak knees. Stick with it and go with it. I did and you know, even with all of the threats I had that they were going to defeat me, I never had a close election. Never had a real close election. Didn't have to wait for absentee ballots to see if won or not. I think that is a real strong answer from the people. People were voting in those days. They've backed off voting some now, but people were voting in those days. They had pretty good percentage rating for voting. That gives you the strength you need to carry you through the stormy days, the stormy times. They will come.

You just have to stabilize your mind, you have to stabilize your position and try desperately not to lose your diplomacy, to move forward, to be as kind as you can but also remember that that plan was developed by 400 people with complete public support at the end and that should never, ever be ignored. Even though it's imperfect it should never be traded off for something because somebody wants to make a few dollars on it.

PRESERVING FARMLANDS

Randi: One of the goals, you talked about this a little bit, preserving farmland. That was one of the goals in the Pleasant Peninsula Plan. Two years passed after adoption and no action had been taken. Then you called a very well attended meeting where you stated that if we didn't do something about developing an agriculture preservation program there wouldn't be any farmland left in 25 years. I remember that meeting very clearly. Within a year the county became the first county in Maryland to have an agriculture preservation program. I see the way you handled that as an example of your leadership style because you didn't come out with an answer. You said alright folks. Here's the problem. How do we solve it? Do you want to talk at all about how you approached your leadership style or where it came from? That seemed to be a very unique part of...

Bernie: During my career in public service, particularly on the local level as county commissioner, I've always held agriculture very high because the farmers, they're the ones that raise the food that we eat, and the fiber. That sustains our lives. They're good people. They're hard working people. For the most part they're very neighborly. They're people that will pitch in and give you a hand if you need it. I've had, there's two groups that I've always had a very warm spot in my heart for, that was the farmer and the waterman because I've done a little of both. Farming was very meager. I helped my grandfather, both of my grandfathers but it

was never a profession for me. You could see what was happening, that even with the zoning we had, which required you to have five acres to build on, that was good when we passed it. I tried to get ten and was out voted. Even at five acres it looked like it was going to work pretty good at first and then we get this, we're spreading all over the farmland. What do you do about this?

Remember I talked with Greg Bowen. I was responsible for Greg going to work over at Tri County Councilman's planner. I was chairman of the council at that time and also pretty responsible for him, getting in on the planning department here in Calvert County. Greg is a good thinker. He's a real good thinker. There's a fellow by the name of Bill Geysler, I don't know whether that rings a bell or not. He was gung ho for Ag preservation so we sort of joined as a trio. We went all around this county talking to farmers. Sometimes we'd four or five people here, four or five people there. We'd explain to them we're not trying to take your farm away. We're not trying to do anything that's injurious to you. We're trying to save farmland, at the same time not hurt you financially. It took a little time, but you know the meeting we had, final meeting we had after all of this planning and talking and cajoling, we listed other areas, talked with other officials. We had a public meeting at Calvert County High School and we took a vote. Took a vote that night. The farmers and the people in general. There was only one hand in opposition to it. I won't mention that name, but he was in opposition to everything.

I don't know whether he's still living or not. I've lost sight of him because he and I were not walking the same walk. But anyway, it was passed and it turned out to be while everything is imperfect, we know that each of us are, it was a step in the right direction to preserve a very, very extremely important part of Calvert's culture and that's to retain agriculture. I think we've done pretty doggone good when you look back at the acres that's been saved in agriculture in perpetuity. I get a lot of comments from newcomers, I really enjoy the environment and seeing a cornfield and soybeans over here and he said it's kind of fun. You don't see that in many counties in Maryland, particularly in the urban areas. You know the farmers get kind of whipped for the demise of the water quality but if you think back, we don't have 10% of the agriculture that we used to have. You think back to my childhood days, that Patuxent River on both sides, every field was full of tobacco. Tobacco was king then. They actually side dressed the tobacco with urea, which is really strong nitrogen.

SAVING CHESAPEAKE BAY

If you had a rain a lot of that would wash into the river and do the thing we were trying not to do and that's enrich the river with nitrogen and phosphorus and toxicity. The farmers today, in my opinion, I'm speaking of southern Maryland now. I know other areas and I'm not the least bit hesitant to say Delmarva's a real problem over there with all those birds and all that manure, we still haven't been able to ... they're working on it but we haven't been able to really get a handle on that. It has such an impact on the people like the Purdue people that raise millions and millions of birds and that's food for the people that need to eat and it's also pretty good income for those who are operating it. I am told, and I have to take the scientist's word for it, the land in which this manure has been spread is so thick that through natural process it would take 50 years for that to correct itself. The point I want to make here, this may be a good time to make it, if that 50 years, I'd be 140 years old. Moses made it 120 years.

If you look back at Moses when he led the Israelites out of Egypt after 400 years of bondage, he didn't get to the Promised Land. He got to see it from the top of the mountain but he did not get to see the Promised Land. It's not a compelling or compulsive reason for me to see it. As long as we know we've got in place without compromise the kind of tools and the plan that's going to do the job. How long did it take to build the Notre Dame in Paris? 125 years or something like that? The architects that started that, the engineers, the people that did the blueprint, none of them lived to see it. It wasn't important. But it got done. That's the way I like to look at the Chesapeake Bay. I know I'm digressing and I'm a perfect candidate for that. Wherever I go, the bay keeps flashing in front of, particularly my beloved Patuxent River. After 45 years of working very hard, the Patuxent River today is in worse shape than it was when I started back in 1969. That was one of several things that catapulted me into public office.

For that I am not discouraged but I am certainly disappointed. There's no room in my heart, mind or soul to stop until physical or mental reasons make that a necessary thing because that Chesapeake Bay is so precious and so economically important. But even more so than that, we're now seeing the *Vibrio vulnificus* raising its ugly head out there. You've got a scratch or cut on you, the hot months July and August, be very careful how you go into the river. I'm not suggesting that we put signs do not go in the river but I can tell you that is bad stuff that can cause even a fatality. We know that because we've had people die from it. We've also had people who've lost limbs from it and I've had personal friends of

mine that has gone through some very trying times and intensive care and all.

We really digressed that time. I guess it gave me a chance to focus in on the bay one more time. I don't think we can repeat that enough because I don't see the same measure of excitement and enthusiasm now that I did not too many years back when every store I went into people would say how's the river coming along, is the bay getting any better?

Well, they've seen hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent and we've done this. I think we can take some pride in we've stopped it from dying but the improvements are there in some areas. Those improvements are not significant enough to throw the towel in and say oh we've got it made now, it's improved. Farmland is important, it'll always be important. We had in the 20th century a billion people on this planet. 21st century seven billion. They expect that to double in the not-too-distant future, 14 billion people. We need the agricultural land to raise the food and fiber to feed these people. It's absolutely every acre of agricultural land we save.

I said it back in the 70s. Land for agricultural purposes down the road my vision tells me will be worth more than it will be for a developer to buy and build on. That's how important it will be. Food prices will be significantly higher but at least we'll have the land to raise that food on. That's a component that we can't shirk. We've got to do it, we've got to save agricultural land. We've got to make sure that farmers are comfortable. If they deserve a penalty, I have no sensitivity about that but I just refuse to accept the fact that farmers in southern Maryland are the problem with the Patuxent River.

They are not the enemy of the Patuxent River. The enemy of the Patuxent River is the air deposition and runoff, which includes agriculture. And the waste water treatment plants. That's the pie chart that's taken us down.

Randi: Well, I have tried to focus on your years as county commissioner. I think we've covered a lot of territory but is there anything about those years that you'd like to talk about that I haven't asked you about yet?

SERVING OTHERS

Bernie: There's some things, I never talked about it. There's some things you get a chance to do, like a kid when I was in the Senate, catches me in the store and says you're Mr. Fowler, you're Senator Fowler aren't you? Yes I am. What's your name? I'm John Doe. Johnny, how are you doing? What can I do for you? Well, mama told me that she knows you well, went to school with you. I don't have the money to pay to go to college and just wondered how I can go about getting a scholarship. It's those kind of things. They're absolutely so valuable to you because you've helped somebody that really needed help. I recall, I won't mention names, I recall one man, he's well known in this county. A volunteer fireman from the day they started, and a good one. Good person, good family man. He had his home and he had his car but they both were heavily mortgaged. He had some serious illnesses, he had a heart problem, he also had cancer. He was trying to get disability. I had a little connection with the federal government at that time. I could go through Steny Hoyer or someone else, Barbara Mikulski.

He told me the situation, says I'm going to lose my home, I'm going to lose my car. We're way behind in payments. They've already told us they're going to foreclose and I cannot get them to agree to my disability. You know my situation. I can't work. I'm not able to work. And he wasn't. He didn't have more than six months to a year to live. It would almost bring tears to your eyes. I called the head goose up there, told him who I was. I said you don't know me and I don't know you. You don't owe me anything. I owe you a lot if you'll help me out. But anyway. I gave him the name and all. He's been struggling to try to get this for so long now. Why is it that the bureaucracy is so stubborn? I can tell you, if you trust me any at all, and that's one thing I'm not going to do is lie to you. That's one thing I will not do to you. This man needs it. He needs it now. He can't wait. He doesn't have more than six months or a year to live. He's going to lose the home and his car. At least give him the memory of knowing that he saved that for his wife and children.

I said will you look at it personally? Will you look over that personally? Will you call me back? He says you've convinced me, yes I will. He called me back a couple of days later. He said you want to call so-and-so and tell him? No, you call him. You're the man that done it. I didn't do it. He called and it wasn't 15 minutes after he called this man called me on the phone. Senator Fowler, and I said yeah? He said my check will be in the mail next week. I cried like a baby. I really did. That's what makes you feel good. You disappoint those out there, it's going to beat up on you because you didn't give him his own or you didn't give him his permit to

do this and that. But then when you find some humble person like this that really needs help and you're able to do it. Not because I had the authority, it was because I was able to convince that man that I was serious. This was desperate, he had to do something. It's a feeling that you take to the grave with you. It's just a good feeling when you look back. More people ought to be doing that.

More people ought to be doing that because it's worth all the paychecks you could get. I seldom get emotional about something but that one, when he called and told me that, I sat and cried like a baby. Nobody there but me when I answered the phone. Wonderful person. I was one of his pallbearers and I was honored to do that. Things like that that you don't talk about but I rarely go somewhere that somebody doesn't walk up, you remember me? You know my mom, you went to school with my mom or you went to school with so and so, my brother or somebody, or my uncle. I want to thank you for that scholarship. I couldn't have made it without your help. It was not my money. It was a state scholarship fund. There again, I set up a scholarship fund. I never knew who was going to get it. Unless like this one kid who came up to me. I said if he's worthy of it, give it to him. I had a school teacher, I had a minister, I had a superintendent of schools. I had everybody knew something about education, knew something about human beings on that committee.

All of my applications were immediately shipped to them. They'd have a meeting and go over it. They decided who would get it. I felt good about that. Now they've taken that away from the senators because it was a pie that some of the senators used a little reckless. That's the way they got the votes. I never knew who was getting the scholarships. Rarely did I get a letter from people thanking me for them. That was a very rare occasion. If I did, I've got it in my file. That wasn't on your agenda either.

Randi: Well, I wanted you to tell me about things like that.

FRIENDS AND ALLIES

Bernie: Oh my goodness. Listen. No man is an island. Had it not been for the wonderful people, they were so equipped intellectually, helped me along the road, I couldn't have made it. I think of Colonel (Lawrence) Bowlby. He was worth his weight in gold. I think of when it was a two to one vote to bring Jack up in as a county administrator. Jack is very quiet and he's not a high-profile person. Not one to jump in front of the cameras and try to take credit for stuff. He's laid back but he was one of the smartest men I've ever met. Very decent man. I worked with him until I went to the Senate. Jack was very helpful. If I had something, I tried out on him and if

he thought it was a bad idea, he'd tell me and he'd give me his reason why he thought it. That was before I was just planting seeds to find whether something would really float. Oh the names ... well Judge Rymer, Tom Rymer was such a ally. I went to see him not too long ago and his hearing's getting kind of bad. He couldn't hear what I was saying very well.

I begged him to run for the Senate. Run for the Senate and I'll go to the House. No, I want you to go for the Senate so I ended up being in the Senate mainly because of his encouragement and insistence. I will never forget the story that he told me. My opponent in Saint Mary's County, you know who that was, it was John Quade. John was over here in the shopping center in Prince Frederick with a borrowed RV and all of these campaign people and they were drinking cocktails enjoying themselves. I'm over in Town Creek, 95-degree weather, beating on doors telling people listen. I'm Bernie Fowler, you don't know me. I'm going to tell you a little something about what I stand for. I want to be your Senator and here's why. I ended up wining pretty handily. Tom told me that John came to him and told him said, you've been pushing Bernie to run for the Senate. He wouldn't run if you hadn't pushed him. Now you're going to make me spend \$10,000 to beat him. I always thought that was a pretty funny story.

Randi: There are a lot of other characters.

Bernie: I think of Fred Goettle. Do you remember him?

Randi: Yes, yes.

Bernie: Big old guy, retired service man. You know, he was good thinker and he really was a great contributor. There was Dr. Wilson down in Scientists Cliffs. I don't even remember his first name. When he came to the office and gave me advice, I knew it was well thought out and I knew it was worth listening to and taking heed to. I really cherished him. He's a very quiet man, didn't have a lot to say but when he spoke, he said something. And Gracie Rymer, when she was secretary of the board of county commission, she was a jewel to work with. Very bright lady, and she had political savvy because her daddy was a big politician. Mr. Meade was a big politician one time, he and Mr. Wesley Stinnett at the end of the county. If they got done up there, they were the movers and shakers, particularly during the election.

There were a lot of kids, I can't name their names, hundreds of kids. I had a busload of kids come to Annapolis one time, testified on my bill that I

was told would never get through the general assembly. It was mandatory requirements of wastewater treatment plants in excess of 500,000 gallons of effluent per day.

ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION

We had some big plants. We had Western Branch Parkway, the Savage. The ten major plants is what I was after. I want to get them retrofitted. Get them to meet certain limitations on nitrogen and phosphorus and we did that. That busload of kids came up and I never will forget the chairman of the committee. He got me in the corner afterwards and he said you know what I think? I'm going to report you to the ethics commission. How did we get by with passing your bill when you bring those kids up there? But it worked.

The governor wasn't going to sign the bill. It was Senate Bill 562 and I went over to talk with him almost with tears in my eyes. He said it's a mean bill. I said governor, I've been doing this a lot of years. Sometimes you have to get the hair up on your back a little bit to get something done. Yes, it's mean but we've waited so many years. We have a plant that's collecting dust that requires that and it hasn't happened. The only successes we've had, the only real progress we've had is through mandatory legislation and actions we've taken in court. Both is not exactly what you want to do but if that is what you have to do to get the job done.

This bay and the Patuxent River is very important. He said would it make you feel any better if I told you I'd sign the bill for you? I said oh, you'd make me happy because your staff had told me no way he's going to sign it. Governor Schaefer signed that bill and you know after those plants got cleaned up in the early 90s when we did the Wade-In, improvements on them, grass was knee high down there. The transparency of the river had improved so much. You could see the little critters coming back, grass coming back. Man, I was like I died and gone to heaven. I can witness some success here. The problem we had is we didn't take into account the fact that as we grow, the volume's going to increase humongously and that's going to neutralize the progress that we've made. We only had 20 million gallons going. Today it's over 60 million. That's tripling the amount we had. The progress we've made was kind of short lived because of the reason I just mentioned. I've tried over and over again. We had a bill that Sue Kullen put in for me.

If she's elected this time, I think she's going to be, I'm going to see if I can get her to introduce the bill again just one more time. What it would do,

it would bring the levels of the total maximum daily loads and all back to what it was in the 50s when we know we had 12 foot of transparency at Sheridan Point in the places in the summertime. If we can use that as a gauge and we can get that bill passed, it's expensive but if we get that bill passed, we'd have one river that would start looking like the old Patuxent used to look. Last but not least, I borrowed it from Winston Churchill, who's a great statesman. He came to the service in time to be a big help in World War II. He was a man that liked a little libation and was all kind of stories about that. It was a big improvement when they took Chamberlain out and let Winston take charge because he had been telling them for years what was going to happen, and they ignored him. He's a very smart man.

But the thing I remember about him most of all is he gave a speech one time and in that was eight words. "Never give up. Never, never, never give up." I've adopted that as a road map for myself and my effort on river. There will come a time when I'll not be able to do the things that I like to do. May come a time when I'm not able to even lead the way but we've got that set up now, so it'll go on in perpetuity. Again, just like Moses and just like the Notre Dame, those folks didn't see the end. We probably won't see the end. But for the good of the world in general, particularly those that we love dearly here and in the land of pleasant living, we've got to continue to screw down on that plan until we get it where it is no way it can fail. We aren't there yet. One of the serious flaws in the new plan, I voted against it in Chesapeake Bay Commission and explained to them why.

The plan sounds good until you get to the very end. New York, West Virginia and Delaware are now partners. The EPA did that because they're in the watershed, so they automatically made them a part of the Chesapeake Bay Commission. The very end of the plan, I forget the exact word, since this organization is really collaborative volunteerism, there's no legal compulsion to do this. We hope that everybody will cooperate but it gives everybody a chance to opt in or opt out of the TMDLs. Do you think the state of New York is going to support that? I don't. You may as well be talking about the Everglades or the Mississippi River or some other place. It's out of their sights, out of their mind. That's the one part of the plan that troubles me. I'm still fighting it. Every chance I get I run my mouth about it. It's the right thing to do. We are not going to clean the bay up until you have a mandatory plan in place that is uncompromised, that forces people to do it. Is it going to take money? Yes. Billions and billions of dollars. That's why I wanted to use the Patuxent River as a laboratory.

The current governor, I really thought Governor O'Malley was going to support me on it because we were very close friends and worked really tight on bay issues. Came to a lot of my Wade-Ins. When I finally asked him, discussed it with him back when he was campaigning, I don't want you to tell me yes or no now but what's wrong with taking the Patuxent River? Don't stop the work on the other tributaries. Take the Patuxent River and use that as a laboratory. Move post haste on it. Get the resources from the federal government, state, wherever you can get it to move Patuxent, expedite all of that. You have a laboratory there, you have benchmark, you can tell whether the plan is working or its failing. You can tweak the plan as you go along without waiting 50 years from now you find out it isn't working. Shorten the time span on this, rush that and make sure it's working there. Then you've got ample reason to utilize it throughout the watershed. The 64,000-mile watershed at Chesapeake Bay. He finally told me that he didn't agree with me, you can't clean but he's wrong. He's absolutely wrong.

Randi: This is one river that's completely in Maryland.

Bernie: He said it's like a person that has sepsis in the arm. You take care of the arm but you let the rest of the body die. I responded, in fact, I've got copies of the letter here, I'll share them with you. His letter to me and my letter back to him. He's absolutely wrong on that. Every scientist worth his salt has told me the impact of the Chesapeake Bay, the flushing out of Chesapeake Bay will have very minimal influence on the Patuxent River. If we can put in check all of the wastewater treatment plants and we can find a way to stop the run off from going in other storm water, which is about 50%, which includes agriculture, hopefully some way because we've got our deposition coming from Ohio and different places and that's 25% of the problem. If you use the Patuxent River and you put post haste on this, I think the Patuxent would prove that it is receptive to being cleaned up and it would react accordingly. Walter Boynton, who's one of the brightest minds on water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, don't compromise you're right. When Walter tells me I'm right, I'm right. I'm not going to back off. We're not going to give up. Whoever the next governor is, we're going to be right in his office to talk to him about it.