April 18, 2009

Governor Martin O'Malley
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21404-1925

Dear Governor O'Malley,

I hope you are well and enjoying your position as governor of the beautiful state of Maryland. As you know, I grew up in Maryland and always treasured my time spent there, which brings me to the point I wanted to raise with you.

I have just learned that Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has been needlessly killing thousands of mute swans in the Chesapeake Bay. The DNR claims that the swans are damaging the ecosystem by consuming aquatic plants. However, there is absolutely no evidence to back this claim up. In fact, from what I have read, run-off from the chicken farms and industrial sites is the main source of pollution.

I understand that there is also concern that mute swans are not native to the Chesapeake Bay. However the Chesapeake Bay has been altered irrevocably over the past 300 years and mute swans are now a naturalized and beautiful part of the Bay's eco-system. It appears, therefore, they are simply being used as a scapegoat for ecosystem damage caused by many other factors including pollution and bay-side land development. Not to mention, the swans are being killed in random and cruel manners. Only about 500 swans remain in the Chesapeake Bay, which is a small fraction of the over 3,500 swans that resided there just 6 years ago.

You have the authority to call off the brutal killings and I really hope you will. So many people from the Delmarva Peninsula are concerned about this. The few swans left in the Chesapeake are not damaging the environment and should therefore be left to live. Mute swans are naturalized to the U.S. and are a beautiful part of the Chesapeake Bay. I hope you will consider stepping in to allow the remaining mute swans to live out their lives in peace and harmony with nature and people. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

Montel Williams