

Don't Let Statistics Mislead You

The white area on this map represents the area of land that drains into the Chesapeake Bay. This area is called the bay's *watershed*.

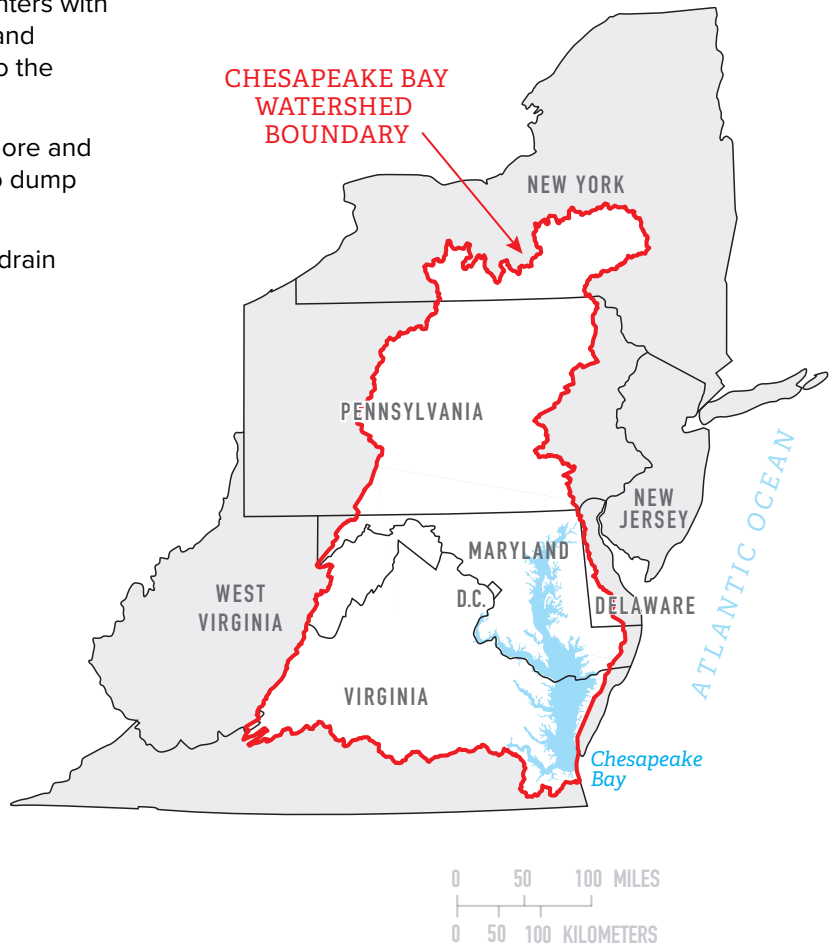
This part of the United States has large **population** centers with paved roads. When rainwater flows from these roads and eventually reaches the bay, this situation contributes to the **disturbance** of the bay's ecosystem.

In an attempt to help the bay **recover**, cities like Baltimore and Washington label storm drains to remind people not to dump pollutants.

The chart below shows what percentage of the storm drain pollution in the bay comes from each area.

Delaware	1%
District of Columbia	1%
Maryland	29%
New York	3%
Pennsylvania	23%
Virginia	41%
West Virginia	2%

Source: EPA Phase 5.3 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Model 2009 Scenario



Consider this: You hear a student who looked at these data say:

“Delaware and D.C. do a much better job keeping storm pollution out of the bay than Maryland and Virginia!”

There is a MAJOR problem with this student’s logic. What is it? What would you say to help someone understand that looking at the percentages alone could be misleading?

