



Citizens Advisory Committee

TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

December 7, 2015

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Nick DiPasquale
Director, Chesapeake Bay Program Office
Chair, Management Board
410 Severn Ave, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21403

Dear Nick,

The Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has been examining and discussing urban agriculture as a means to advance Chesapeake Watershed Agreement goals.

At our quarterly meeting on September 16, 2015, we hosted a panel comprised of representatives of The Green Scheme in DC, Healthy Harford in Harford County Maryland, and Baltimore Office of Sustainability. Each program was unique in how they approached urban agriculture—from converting vacant lots, to rooftop gardening, to community gardens—but the panelists all agreed that urban agriculture offered important opportunities to increase the number and diversity of stewards in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, engage with non-traditional or under-represented communities on the environment, address needs for local healthy food as well add greenspace to cities and reduce harmful stormwater runoff.

In our subsequent research, we learned of a report, recently released by the non-profit American Rivers and funded through a grant from the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office, entitled *Urban Farms: A Green Infrastructure Tool for the Chesapeake Bay*. The report underscores the potential benefits of urban agriculture for the watershed, highlights examples of communities—large and small—developing urban agriculture and recommends ten policy actions that city officials in the Chesapeake Bay watershed should consider.

We commend the Bay Program for supporting this report as well as the cities identified in the report and believe that other Bay Program partners, in addition to cities and local governments, can play a role in advancing the green infrastructure potential of urban gardening. In this regard, we encourage the Management Board to incorporate urban agriculture into the two year Workplans being developed by the Goal Implementation Teams and Diversity Action Team and to give it full and careful consideration in Bay Program and State funding opportunities.



Jessica M. Blackburn, CAC Coordinator
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As CAC meets throughout the watershed, we strive to bring examples of successful programs that help advance the restoration effort and the vision, principles, and goals of the Chesapeake Watershed Agreement. We hope you will give consideration to urban agriculture as a concept and policy to encourage as the restoration community seeks to broaden its audience and find new ways of engaging the residents of the watershed and achieving other watershed restoration goals.

Sincerely,



Charlie Stek
Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee

cc: Management Board Members
Goal Implementation Team Chairs

Attachment: *Urban Farms: A Green Infrastructure Tool for the Chesapeake Bay*



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