



Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
September 13-14, 2023
Fredericksburg, VA

Stakeholders' Members Present: John Dawes (remote), Andrew Der, Matt Ehrhart, Donna Harris-Aikens, Verna Harrison, Chuck Herrick (Vice-Chair), Hamid Karimi, Julie Patton Lawson (Chair), David Lillard, Mike Lovegreen, Joe Maroon, Abel Olivo (remote), Kate Patton, Daphne Pee (remote), Vaughn Perry (remote), Tim Rupli, BeKura Shabazz, Charlie Stek, Dana Wiggins, and Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Staff Jess Blackburn, Alex LoCurto, and Adam Bray

Speakers/Guests Present: Kate Fritz, Travis Voyles (remote), Jeff Lerner, Rachel Felver (remote), Martha Shimkin (remote), Anna Killius, Amy Handen, Nadja Grembowitz, Jennifer Starr (remote), Kathy Stecker, (remote), Catherine Krikstan (remote), Erin Penzelik (remote)

Meeting presentations and materials are located at:

[Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting \(September 2023\) | Chesapeake Bay Program](#)

Wednesday, September 13, 2023

The Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Chair, Julie Patton Lawson, called the meeting to order at 11:00 AM. The meeting goal is to come to consensus on the Committee's annual recommendations to the Executive Council.

Business Meeting

Julie reminded the Committee that the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) approved the official name change from Citizens to Stakeholders' in July 2023. The request does not need to be approved by the Executive Council (EC).

- Chuck Herrick provided an update for the Stipends Workgroup. The group is exploring funding mechanisms and program options including possible federal, state, or other NGO support.
- With a motion by Charlie and a second by David, the Committee voted to approve the May 2023 Quarterly Meeting minutes as submitted.
- The Committee approved the proposed 2024 Meeting dates: February 22-23; May 22-23; September 18-19; and December 12-13.

Member Spotlights: Verna Harrison and Julie Patton Lawson offered more about their backgrounds and current work. The goal of the member spotlights is for members to learn about their colleagues.

Virginia's Progress on Chesapeake Watershed Agreement - (presentation link)

Travis Voyles, Virginia Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources

Secretary Voyles provided updates on Virginia's progress in meeting the *Watershed Agreement* goals and thoughts on Beyond 2025. Governor Youngkin signed an amendment to the biennial budget, which includes a record \$700+ million in state funding for water quality, resilience, and land conservation.

VA is on track to meet the phosphorus and sediment goals, but off track to meet the nitrogen goal. The majority of remaining reductions are needed from the agriculture and development sectors. Some of the *Watershed Agreement* goals are far behind because there was no state agency designated as the lead and the 2025 goals were not tempered with the realities of funding availability and capacity for implementation.

Agricultural BMPs have not been fully funded based on the true needs for VA Soil and Water Conservation Districts and Virginia farmers to meet a 2025 goal. The costs for implementation in that time frame were not realistic. Based on the feedback from the agricultural community of their needs, a more realistic funding target and timeline for the goals is 2030, but VA is aiming for 2027-2028 for the goal of implementation of these practices. Some practices will be made mandatory. Additionally, they are working internally to ensure that information is accurate in the Bay models. VA expects the results on the ground are much better than what the models are showing.

Initiatives to advance forest buffers include working with the VA Dept of Forestry (DOF) to create an updated statewide Riparian Forest Buffer Action Plan. They received \$6.6 million in USDA Forest Service (IRA Funding) for increased tree planting, maintenance, and heat mitigation projects including asphalt removal.

Initiatives to advance wetlands restoration include designating the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) as the lead for the state wetlands action plan and enhancing collaboration with the VA Marine Resources Commission. There is a high need to add capacity with only one wetlands biologist on staff and leverage BIL and IRA funded.

A key success in the *Watershed Agreement* is the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (VMRC) Oyster Restoration efforts. The oyster goal is on track to meet the 2025 deadline. The oyster population in VA is very strong due to the five tributaries targeted for large-scale oyster replenishment. VA's oyster restoration program is committed to not only sustaining but also expanding its restoration initiatives to match or exceed the achievements of the previous phase. Success of the oyster restoration effort is being heralded as an example of what can be accomplished through a multifaceted collaborative approach to taking on the challenges of meeting ambitious restoration goals that have important economic and ecologic impacts.

Discussion:

- *Wetlands Protection:* Members asked that given the recent Sackett v. EPA decision which weakened federal laws protecting wetlands, if the Secretary had heard of efforts by the General Assembly to roll-back VA protections or if Governor Youngkin would exercise a veto if a bill passed. Secretary Voyles responded first by re-affirming that VA's laws on wetland and water protection continue to exceed the federal standard so he does not see an immediate impact in Virginia from the Sackett decision. Secretary Voyles recognized that Virginia will need to develop innovative policies and approaches as the Commonwealth continues to see increased development that will mean increased encroachment on existing wetlands. Governor Youngkin has spoken strongly about VA's current protections that impact the Chesapeake Bay. However, the upcoming November election for the General Assembly will play a major role in that question. Sec. Voyles added that he doesn't view it as a partisan issue in Virginia, that people across the political spectrum love the Bay as well as the protections that VA has had in place for a while.
- *Modeled v Real World Results:* A member asked if there was a review of how the computer modeled improvements correspond to monitored observations on the land and in the water. Secretary Voyles said there is a mixed answer. There needs to be more targeted monitoring to inform decisions/future actions, not just general monitoring. Monitoring data should be strategic due to the lag times of practices taking full effect. He added that he anticipates that we will continue to see a difference in results between the models and the monitoring data. For example, the fertilizer application problem when we were seeing things that we didn't necessarily agree with in the model and were trying to figure out why we were seeing what we saw. In that instance, there was something wrong in the model that needed to be changed, but it wasn't necessarily a reflection of ongoing monitoring efforts that led us there. That is not to say that we couldn't have that situation in the future that could help inform better modeling and other direct actions that do not require modeling.

[Charting A Course to 2025 - \(presentation link\)](#)

Rachel Felver, CBP Communications Director

Jeff Lerner, Acting Branch Chief of CBP's Partnership and Accountability; Chair of the Healthy Watersheds Goals Implementation Team

The *Charting a Course to 2025* report is in response to the Executive Council's charge for the PSC to bring recommendations on integrating new science and restoration strategies leading up to 2025. These recommendations should consider new and emerging scientific data and studies that could help modify current progress reporting and adaptive management approaches as well as existing and emerging challenges (e.g., climate change, population growth, etc.) and how these challenges could alter collective restoration priorities. The EC also asked for a report on progress on the outcomes in the *Chesapeake Watershed Agreement*.

18 outcomes are on-course to meet the 2025 deadline; 11 are off-course; and 2 are uncertain. The report highlights characteristics of successful outcomes which include clear commitments and cost estimates. Challenges for off-course outcomes include (1) Bay TMDL: practices in place will meet 51% of nitrogen, 60% of phosphorus and 100% of sediment by 2025, continued threats from climate change, pollution loads from Conowingo Dam, increasing human and animal populations, and limitations in regulating non-point sources; (2) Climate Change and DEIJ: both outcomes lack sufficient support, including across related outcomes and require specific actions, commitments and cost estimates; (3) Forest Buffers and Wetlands: these off-course outcomes need more specific targeting, track and reporting systems, state and federal champions, and better integration with climate and DEIJ.

New science is shifting the thinking on the deep waters of the bay, the implementation of the BMPs and the associated lag times. That better informs on how shallow waters are handled especially since they are the waters that people are more likely to recreate. There is a high need to enhance capacity building and community engagement, including the need to incorporate more social information and data into geospatial projects. This will help a better understanding of the community partnerships and inform CBP work.

CBP is experiencing unprecedented federal funding because of the bipartisan infrastructure law which has provided additional funding of over \$200 million just for the CBP itself, the Inflation Reduction Act, and additional funding for other federal agencies.

For the Critical path Forward, the focus is on addressing non-point source pollution, which includes stormwater and agricultural runoff. Increased investment in forest buffers and wetlands can aid in achieving non-point source reduction goals. Capacity building is also crucial, involving greater engagement with local governments and private landowners for information sharing and technical assistance. Additionally, there's a need for a stronger social science strategy that is incorporated across the CBP, along with specific goals for shallow waters.

Discussion:

- *Geographic Targeting:* Members discussed the need to provide smaller scale geographic targeting on the sub-watershed scale, like the successful oyster restoration, in order to advance the forest buffer outcome. The high-resolution land cover data can help with this approach. This can allow for designing targeted buffers for specific outcomes and fosters collaboration with private landowners so that we can achieve watershed outcomes while maximizing farm productivity.
- *Engaging Communities:* Members raised the need for new approaches to engage with communities traditionally left out of the work, including aligning local concerns with Bay watershed goals, like marsh resiliency and local crabs.
- *Path Forward:* Members discussed the need for more specific commitments and cost estimates to achieve off-course outcomes and activities by and beyond 2025, including regulatory backstops from EPA and an honest assessment of pollution reduction from nonpoint sources like stormwater and agriculture. These cost estimates will not be included in the final draft of the *Charting a Course to 2025* report, but speakers agreed these discussions are important, need partner commitments and social science will help advance nonpoint source focus.

- *Local Implementation:* Members raised the need for lateral communications to link efforts from grants and land trusts to local communities.
- *Communicating Progress and State Funding:* A member recognized the importance of showcasing progress, but suggested the ‘consideration of realities’ also needs to be communicated. State budget cuts often target non-regulated areas even when they are key Bay goals. The Governors/DC Mayor should be educated on the implications of budget cuts and other decisions, like the recent Supreme Court case on wetlands and how it connects to broader Bay goals. Local and state wetlands protections will have to remain strong because federal protections are weaker.
- *Lifespan of BMPs:* Members discussed the challenges of operational maintenance of BMPs with growing pressures like climate change and increases in human and animal populations. These challenges will require a strong stewardship response especially with stormwater practices nearing the end of their 10-yr lifespans.
- *Public Comment on the Charting the Course to 2025 Report:* A member raised a concern about not including the public comments on the report recommendations to the Executive Council. The PSC should be made aware of the public comments or the value of the report and the commenting process is diminished. Public comments have been categorized, but will not be ready to share in time for the EC. Members expressed their frustration with this response.
- *TMDL Progress:* Members discussed progress on the TMDL is largely due to point source pollution reduction and suggested pollution sector investments could be worthwhile beyond 2025. A caution for cost-effective targeting just for the Chesapeake Bay could hinder de-listing for local streams and that a tributary approach that considers more than nutrient reduction to include water temperature and other local stream stressors should be used.
- *Ambitious Yet Realistic WIP goals:* Citing the 85,000-acre wetland goal, a member expressed frustration about being in the 3rd phase of the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) yet there are still unrealistic goals in the plans. It is unclear how some of the numerical goals were set in the *Chesapeake Watershed Agreement* and more realistic goals should be set beyond 2025 and in the next Agreement.

Subcommittee Reports and Discussion:

Following a brief review of the 2022 Committee recommendations to the Executive Council, an overview of 2023 Stakeholders’ Committee Agenda topics, and guidelines for creating actionable and timely recommendations by Jess Blackburn, Committee Coordinator, the Subcommittees spent time in breakout sessions to develop their 2023 recommendations.

- *Stewardship & Engagement:* Subcommittee Chair, BeKura Shabazz reported continued discussions and focus on creating a need-based stipend for Committee members and equitable access to grant funding. There is a strong emerging focus on restorative processes for Committee engagement that the subcommittee is still exploring, including the creation of best practices or guiding principles for the Stakeholders’ Committee. The subcommittee will share more about this concept at the next quarterly meeting.
- *Conservation and Land Use:* Kate Patton reported on behalf of the Subcommittee in the Chair Ann Jurczyk’s absence. The subcommittee discussed tree canopy and forest coverage across the watershed and the need to prioritize smaller forest acreage like riparian areas of 10-15 acres. They discussed the need to credit the protection of forest lands. They suggest recommendations to prioritize the conservation of mature forests including encouraging the Governors to support protection provisions in the Farm Bill. They also recommend the continued funding of the high-resolution land use data and mapping.
- *Water Quality:* Matt Ehrhart, Subcommittee Chair, deferred their report-out until the following day when they will lead discussion on their subcommittee’s priority topic.

Thursday, September 14, 2023

The meeting to order at 8:30AM. Julie Lawson reviewed action items from the May 2023 meeting. The Committee agreed to send a letter to the Bay Program requesting formal membership for Choose Clean Water

Coalition and other outside stakeholders on the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee. Continued discussions and feedback raised concerns around recommending a specific NGO or groups and how to keep the Steering Committee a size still functional to meet its charge. The Executive Committee decided to not send the letter, but rather worked behind the scenes and within the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee to ensure outside stakeholder involvement. Anna Killius, Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and Beyond 2025 Steering Committee co-chair, will provide a more detailed briefing on updates on the Beyond 2025 work and how public engagement is being included in the process.

The second action item was to research more about the high-resolution land-use data mapping tool and to send a letter to the CBP advocating for continued funding. This tool supports local government decision-making about local land use and development. The Conservation and Land-Use Subcommittee, along with Anne Jurczyk, will work on drafting the letter and/or consider it as their recommendation to the EC. Charlie suggested that the letter to the EC be revised based on the grounds that it is EPA money funding the land use data so it's not necessarily appropriate to send a letter to the EC. He proposed sending the letter to the EPA Administrator and to the congressional delegations with a copy to the EC.

Mike mentioned the Upper Susquehanna Coalition in New York identified the top 10 urban nutrient management practices and has been working on sharing this information with different urban areas. There is also a reporting tool for localities to report any implemented BMPs.

Kate shared annual reports from the Delmarva Restoration and Conservation Network, a coalition focused on protecting and restoring nature refuges in the local watershed across Delmarva. The Network has expanded to include over 100+ partners. This is the first annual report that outlines accomplishments and progress made over the past 4-5 years.

Hamid proposed exploring potential synergy or coordination between the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) to enhance the impact of their recommendations to the EC. There was agreement to coordinate with the other advisory committees as has been done in the past. Jess added that having recently listened to the STAC meeting, a key point that they will likely raise to the EC, is for the program to embrace institutional learning on all of the reports, particularly the Comprehensive Evaluative System Response (CESR) report. The program needs to create some space to use adaptive management to revisit the outcomes and goals.

Members discussed their frustration that the 2025 goals are still characterized as unrealistic despite many reviews and updates of the Watershed Implementation Plans. There are goals that were more aspirational than rational. The leadership that developed the *Watershed Agreement* goals in 2014 are no longer in place. It is possible that there was rational thinking at the time, for example, the 85,000-acre goal for restored wetlands, but the goals need to be revisited beyond 2025.

Amy Handen answered questions about how social science will be used in the CBP. It will be used internally to assess the current governance structure of the CBP, and its ability to help workgroups and teams achieve their outcome. Behavioral science will also be used to help in outcome achievements, particularly in the Stewardship outcome to learn about what interventions may help the general public take certain actions.

Verna shared her frustrations about the lack of inclusion of public comment from the *Charting the Course to 2025* report, which she believes disincentivizes people from participating. She agreed that decision making is a major flaw in the program right now and does not know how to resolve a fundamental problem like that.

[Chesapeake Bay Program Updates- \(presentation link\)](#)

Martha Shimkin, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Deputy Director

On October 19th the Executive Council will celebrate the CBP's 40th Anniversary, discuss on the Reaching 2025 recommendations, and elect the 2024 Chair for the EC. U.S. Maryland Senator Ben Cardin, will make remarks about the Program's past, present and future.

Martha shared the three main recommendations from the Inspector General's (IG) Report: "[The EPA Should Update Its Strategy, Goals, Deadlines, and Accountability Framework to Better Lead the Chesapeake](#)"

[Bay Restoration Efforts](#)”, including: (1) A strategy on non-point source reduction is needed; (2) Create a timeline for pollution controls and practices to be in place to meet TMDL, (3) Create an assurance mechanism regarding the TMDL. If the IG’s corrective actions are not resolved the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) receives a report and it triggers a Congressional hearing. EPA’s final response to the IG is due September 15, 2023. It will be made public once the IG publishes it.

Martha concluded with the CBP response to the Stakeholders’ Committee 2022 recommendations to the EC. For the recommendation to enforce existing regulations, target priority practice with co-benefits, and provide technical assistance for implementation Martha explained that CBP is working with the state to spend and allocate funds in a rational way. For the recommendation around large scale solar development, she indicated there is ongoing mapping that will provide good data on where to begin projects on large scale solar fields.

Discussion:

- *EPA IG Report:* Members expressed concerns about the EPA’s draft response to the IG report. The language EPA used is challenging in terms of the timing as we approach 2025 and is confusing when it comes to EPA’s accountability role for the Bay TMDL. The sentence in particular, “as a member of the CBP partnership, EPA is a *partner* not a *regulator*”, gives great pause, especially since EPA used its authority in PA. While that sentence can be applied generally to EPA’s role in the Bay Program Office, a statement from EPA claiming not to be a regulator doesn’t advocate for its authority under the Clean Water Act. It is confusing that EPA did not highlight TMDL backstops in their response because: (1) when they were crafted, the backstops were acknowledged as things that would not solve the problem but where punitive incentives to make states use their regulatory authority to drive down nonpoint source pollution, and (2) under the Clean Water Act, if the TMDL is not met, those permit limits which the agency has authority over are to be ratcheted down in an effort to meet the TMDL. Martha thanked the members for their comments and re-affirmed that the EPA is a regulatory agency and does possess enforcement protocols. She understands and values the concerns raised because it matters how the public interprets the report and EPA’s response. Martha said she would share those remarks today to those drafting the final EPA response to the IG.

[Beyond 2025 Update - \(presentation link\)](#)

Anna Killius, Chesapeake Bay Commission Executive Director, Beyond 2025 Steering Committee Co-Chair

Anna Killius began her presentation giving a brief overview and history of the Chesapeake Bay Commission which is a tri-state (VA, MD, PA) legislative body established in the 1980s. The Commission is a signatory of all the Chesapeake Bay Agreements and serves as the only legislative body represented on the Executive Council.

The PSC has until the 2024 annual Executive Council meeting to prepare recommendations that continue to address new advances in science and restoration, along with a focus on the CBP partnership beyond 2025. The PSC charged the Management Board (MB) to draft the recommendations. The MB created a two phased approach: Step 1: Determine the scope and breadth of what will be undertaken to meet the EC charge and develop a plan to complete that work and Step 2: Execute the Plan. Developing a path forward and implementing the plan is not possible within the timeframe before the 2024 EC meeting. The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee will undertake the work.

The Steering Committee membership is the 7 watershed jurisdictions, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, 8 core federal agencies, a representative from the Scientific and Technical Assessment and Reporting group (STAR), the 3 advisory committees, the 6 goal implementation teams. The current proposal for stakeholder engagement is to bring on two non-voting seats to the Steering Committee. The Steering Committee is co-chaired by Anna Killius and Martha Shimkin. The goal: “We will assess where we are and where we want to be in reaching our shared vision for the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed; and identify a path forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program focused on what we do and how we work.”

EPA contracted with the Eastern Research Group (ERG) to concurrently execute an independent evaluation based on questions developed by the Steering Committee. The evaluation findings will be presented in the 2nd quarter of 2024 and finalized in the 3rd quarter. The Steering Committee will develop recommendations to the PSC/EC based on ERG's evaluation.

Discussion:

- Members expressed concern about the Steering Committee membership. They are the same people who have failed to meet the deadlines. Anna responded that they should be the ones held accountable to their constituencies to get the work done.
- The Steering Committee will probably provide advice on where change is needed for the next *Watershed Agreement*, but Anna indicated that there will be an extended review of the to determine if they are realistic and better understand the numerical targets, like the wetlands outcome, after the Steering Committee drafts its recommendations for the 2024 EC meeting.

Water Quality Subcommittee Priority Topic

Subcommittee members led a discussion on recent reports and shared their reflections on the implications for the water quality targets in the Bay TMDL. The reports referenced are the Charting the Course to 2025, Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR), and the recent IG report.

Matt gave a brief summary of the CESR report and associated webinar. The report publicly acknowledged what we have had a sense of for a long time: that our current level of implementation actions is not going to satisfy the TMDL. Making water quality improvements in the Bay is really complicated because of lag times in responses to changes in temperature and climate that drive fundamental biological processes. The report also highlighted challenges not yet broadly acknowledged like the opportunities to focus actions around shallow waters and living resources responses instead of the deep channel of the Bay.

Verna reiterated that this is a crucial moment in time and that it is important to speak truth to power. Hamid added that it is very important to include the public comments in the Charting the Course to 2025 Report, particularly because it shows engagement and great interest from the public. Verna characterized the IG report and EPA response as confusing. There should be clarification because the public is not going to pick up on the nuance that supposedly the EPA is a partner and not a regulator.

Joe agreed with the confusing statement of EPA playing the role of partner and not enforcer. If that is the case, then who is going to make sure that those things happen? Joe offered some context on the original optimism on what could be accomplished during the signing of the first bay agreement but that by today the attitude has shifted and that there is a lot of frustration despite progress being made. Joe is concerned about where we will be in 2050. What we do now in the next decade will be the deciding factor for that outcome. The Charting the Course to 2025 report looks in the short-term at what we need to do differently between now and 2025. The long-term vision is the CESR report which represents a major change in the CBP strategy to focus on shallow waters. The CBP needs to revisit what a restored Bay looks like.

More clarity was shared about the real-world implication of the IG report. The IG must accept EPA's responses as resolved or it can cause a Congressional hearing that could have a monetary impact on the CBP funding.

Action Items:

- Letter to EPA Region 3 (PSC Chair) on their response to the IG: Recommend that the EPA clarify the distinction of their role in the CBP partnership and their overarching responsibility as an enforcer for the Clean Water Act and holding jurisdictions accountable on achieving Bay goals, especially as they relate to the TMDL outcomes. Include language on EPA's position on backstops for the TMDL (Dec 2022 CAC minutes).
- Letter to EPA Administrator (EC Chair) about the importance of CBP 40th Anniversary: This is the 40th anniversary of the Bay commitments and in light of the significance of that milestone, the Stakeholders'

Committee believes the Administrator's attendance at the EC meeting sends a strong statement of EPA's commitment to leadership going forward.

2023 Recommendations to the Executive Council:

Water Quality (WQ) Subcommittee:

- Within 6 months, the PSC should approve actionable items for each jurisdiction to accelerate their implementation plans and close the progress gaps for the water quality goals/TMDL. This should include identifying champions for each major goal, longer term funding, ambitious yet reasonable goals, realistic expectation of progress, incorporation and addressing stakeholder comments, etc.
- Within six months, the PSC should provide a publicly accessible process and timeline for actions that will be taken by the EC in 2025 to review and set new goals which incorporate issues raised in the CESR report
- Forest buffers and wetlands, which have been repeatedly recognized for their water quality and habitat value in the bay region, are lagging behind in restoration and conservation goals. We urge the EC to commit resources and funding to greatly enhance the incentives for establishing and restoring them
- Urge the Governors of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania to resist any attempt to roll back state level wetland protections in light of the recent Supreme Court case.

Conservation and Land-Use (CLU) Subcommittee

- Provide funding for high-res data especially beyond 2025
- Create incentives to protect of existing mature forests and wetlands, including smaller land parcels that are vulnerable to development
- Projects along streams, especially stream restoration projects, need to have a buffer protection component.
 - Note for future discussion: CLU subcommittee would also like to see the creation of a credit program for the protection of forest buffers instead of credits only for planting new ones. CLU will look into past discussion and revisit this topic as a recommendation either in the December 2023 meeting or later in 2024

Stewardship and Engagement (S&E) Subcommittee:

- Reiterate why honorarium/stipend matters because it demonstrates that there is a good faith effort being made to create meaningful engagement by meeting communities where they are if time/money may be a barrier for committed participation.
- Note for future discussion/priority:
 - Improve inclusivity and belonging for all members of the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
 - Create norms to support Committee values
 - Starts with the Stakeholders' Committee so that all members feel heard
 - Support better interaction and engagement beyond the Committee

Members wrapped up the discussion with their thoughts on the potential of a new CBP Agriculture Advisory Committee. The Agricultural Secretaries sent a letter to EPA as the chair of the PSC. Members shared that this new advisory committee creates the argument that there should be other sector specific advisory groups. Members agreed that there could be more inclusion of farmer's perspective at the Bay Program, including on the Stakeholders' Committee, but wondered if a new committee is the right path forward. Questions were raised on whether real farmers could participate or if representation will be from agriculture industry and farm bureau.

The subcommittees will have the opportunity to finalize the language for their respective recommendations as Jess drafts the letter to the EC for the final approval by the Stakeholders' Executive Committee. With no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting at 12:30 PM.

Stakeholders' Advisory Committee 2023 Next Meeting
December 6-7, Havre de Grace, MD