

# EPA's Evaluation of the Final Conowingo WIP

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# Why Evaluate the Conowingo WIP?

- EPA evaluated the Conowingo WIP in accordance with its oversight role under the Chesapeake Bay TMDL accountability framework and the PSC's Conowingo WIP framework.
- The evaluation process followed the one established for the jurisdictions' WIPs and two-year milestones.
- As part of its oversight role, EPA needs to determine if the final Conowingo WIP provides confidence that the load reductions will be achieved by 2025.
- The EPA evaluation was released to the PSC and larger public on January 25, 2022.

# Highlights of Key Evaluation Findings - Strengths

- Strong collaborative approach to Conowingo WIP development
- Targets cost-effective practices in most effective areas in the Susquehanna Basin
- Conowingo WIP CAST scenario demonstrates achievement of nutrient targets
- Comprehensive review process for BMP project identification, selection, and implementation
- Detailed strategy for stakeholder outreach in priority areas

# Highlights of Key Evaluation Findings – Recommended Enhancements

- No funding commitments have been finalized to support Conowingo WIP implementation
  - Continued lack of funding → No confidence load reductions will be achieved by 2025
- More detail is needed on:
  - Which (new/existing) programs will be targeted to support BMP implementation
  - How resources and technical assistance needs will be balanced between this WIP and the jurisdictions' WIP to alleviate competition for these resources
  - Specific locations and partners involved in BMP implementation within the Susquehanna Basin

# Conowingo WIP Financing Strategy

- While innovative, the Phase 1 financing implementation strategy was not approved by the PSC; significant comments and concerns were raised on the approach (particularly the use of SRF).
- A revenue plan has not been adopted by the PSC that identifies specific funding sources and commitments to support Conowingo WIP implementation.

# Next Steps

- EPA encourages jurisdictions to review and evaluate federal and state funding sources over the next 60 days to increase confidence that the Conowingo WIP will be funded and implemented, and therefore load reductions will be achieved by 2025.
- If this is not addressed within 60 days, nutrient loads will be re-distributed to jurisdictions, as appropriate.

# Questions and Discussion