



Chesapeake Bay Program
Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Overview of Local Governments in each Watershed Jurisdiction

Local Government Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting
December 5th, 2025

Agenda

1 New York

2 Delaware

3 District of Columbia

4 Maryland

5 Pennsylvania

6 Virginia

7 West Virginia



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New York

Local Government

- New York is a home rule state and gives broad discretion to local governments.
- Counties
 - 62 counties in the state, with 20 located at least partially in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.
 - There are not unincorporated areas of the counties. Everyone lives in a municipality and a county.
 - Three common forms: 1) Board of Supervisors/Legislators, 2) County Executive, and 3) County Manager/Administrator.
 - Board of Supervisors/Legislators can have both legislative and executive functions. If there is an elected County Executive or an appointed County Manager, they have executive responsibilities.
 - Counties are responsible for health & human services, infrastructure, public amenities, public safety, and development (with IDA's and local municipalities).
- Municipalities (Cities, Towns, Villages)
 - Total: 62 cities, 933 towns (including first class, second class, and suburban), 555 villages.
 - In the watershed: 7 cities, 187 towns, 58 villages.
 - Town Board serves legislative and executive functions, led by Town Supervisor.
 - Cities can have council-manager, strong mayor-council, weak mayor-council, or commission format.
 - Villages have a board of trustees composed of a mayor and typically four trustees. Mayor serves as executive.
 - Municipalities are responsible for public works, public safety, drinking water, waste water, roads, schools, waste collection, and ZONING.

The Environmental Review Process



NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)

In the US, all federal agencies, federally funded or approved projects are subject to NEPA, and if needed, an EIS.

- NEPA is a decision-making tool
- A public involvement tool
- A transparency tool
- Does not guarantee no impacts

MINI-NEPA's or State-level review

In the US, ~ 20 States and jurisdictions have adopted their own version of NEPA.

In the Chesapeake Bay Watershed:

- District of Columbia Environmental Policy Act of 1989 (DCEPA)
- Maryland Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)
- New York State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA)
- Virginia Environmental Impact Report Procedure (VAEIR)

Engagement with Local



- Most of the communities within the New York portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed are small and have limited local government capacity to undertake water quality restoration activities.
- Our Phase III WIP highlighted opportunities to increase voluntary implementation of best management practices and increase capacity at local government through education and outreach to private landowners, urban nutrient management program, urban forestry grant program, circuit-rider planning program network, and technical assistance collaborative/repository.
- NYS DEC is working with Regional Planning and Development Boards to increase shared technical expertise and services. This model has been implemented successfully in New York's agricultural sector through the Upper Susquehanna Coalition of Soil and Water Conservation Program at the County Level.
- What kind of support does your state/commonwealth offer local governments (funding, technical assistance etc.)?
 - Drinking Water Source Protection Program
 - Climate Smart Communities
 - Resilient NY
 - Statewide competitive grant programs through NYS DEC, NYS AGM, and NYS DOS

Reflections on Local Government

- **Successes**
 - Watershed Implementation Plan wastewater treatment plant outreach and upgrades for treating phosphorus
 - Statewide competitive grant opportunities (\$42 million in FY25 across the watershed)
- **Challenges**
 - Capacity and priority at the municipal scale
 - Coordination amongst municipalities
 - Climate change – increased flooding
- **Lessons Learned**
 - More targeted outreach is needed at the municipal level (workshops)
 - Unification on DEC within central and regional offices
 - Flexible grant funding is needed
- **Opportunities**
 - Continue implementing lessons learned
 - Grant writing workshops



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Delaware

Local Government

- Dillon's Rule State – what is allowed is in their charter.
- Counties
 - 3 counties, all partially in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
 - All 3 counties have unincorporated area within them.
 - New Castle - 12 Districts Councilmen/ Councilwomen, separate Council President; Kent - 7. Commissioners, 6 Districts, 1 At Large; Sussex - 5 Districts Councilmen/ Councilwomen.
 - N.C. County has elected executive; other 2 counties have hired administrators.
 - Counties are responsible for property mapping, transfers, zoning, and land use decisions. Not roads.
- Municipalities
 - City, Town, Village.
 - 57 municipalities, currently 9 fully in, 3 partially in the watershed, 1 is split by DE/MD state line.
 - Independent of counties. Coordination with counties for municipal annexation.
 - Number of elected leaders varies by municipality and titles may vary. Mayor, President of Council, Councilmen/ Councilwomen.
 - Municipal responsibilities vary by their charter. Most are responsible for designated streets. Some have their own water and sewer. Some share a sewer facility.

Engagement with Local



- Through one-on-one or in-person meetings, but also through events organized by local county groups, charettes, and through virtual roundtables held on Chesapeake Bay topics.
- Primarily the Dept of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC), but also local county entities such as the Conservation Districts. We also get support from local NGO such as the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance. These groups partner with local governments by providing funding information, technical support, and, in the case of the NGOs, assistance with project design/organization/implementation.
- DE primarily provides funding support in the form of competitive grants, and technical assistance for project development and proposals. State Planning Office assists with comprehensive plans, ordinance reviews, zoning changes, land use reviews, and annexation requests.

Reflections on Local Government

- Successes

- Working one-on-one with local governments.
- Understanding the vision of a local government and then assisting them in securing funding to accomplish the clean water components of the vision.
- Announcements of funding and incentive programs at larger-scale events, either virtually or at local conferences, helps with wider knowledge and engagement.
- Finally getting a reserve fund to fill gaps in projects projected cost and submitted bids.
- Ability to mesh funding from several sources to put projects on the ground.
- Creation of the University of Delaware's Grant Assistance Program to assist in grant proposals for municipalities.
- Utilizing the Summer Interns from the Nanticoke Watershed Alliance in the weeding of installed projects.

- Challenges

- There were challenges in project continuation and new projects during the COVID period.
- Challenges with funding for maintenance work on existing BMP's to extend the BMP lifespan.
- Turnover of the DE DNREC staff working on the Chesapeake Bay in the past 10 years.
- There are still challenges with funding for planning and design for new projects.
- There are still challenges securing the non-federal match for projects.
- There are still challenges with having sufficient trained staff for long term maintenance of projects.

Reflections on Local Government

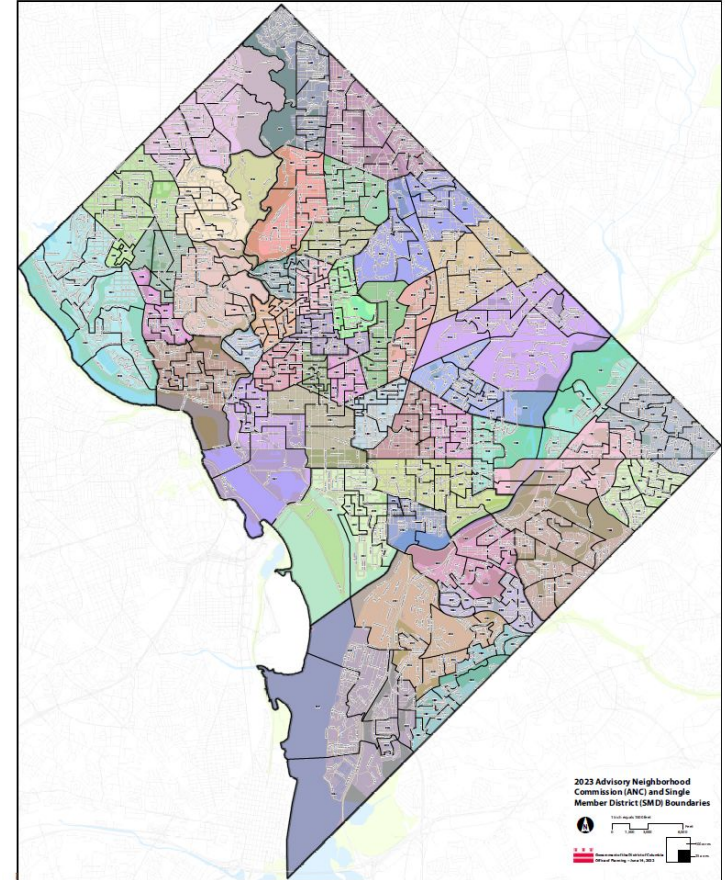
- Lessons Learned
 - The state needs to treat municipalities as their customers in the effort to clean up and protect local waterways. Know what your customers' needs/wants are.
 - Cross train staff. All the CB staff at DNREC should be knowledgeable about the other staff duties, grants, and programs.
 - Encourage municipalities to have visioning sessions / charrettes for their residents / businesses to develop a roadmap for clean water projects.
 - DE is small enough to dedicate staff to work with the municipalities. It takes time to know municipalities and build trust.
- Opportunities
 - Annual or bi-annual engagement with local government entities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed portion of Delaware to ensure that they have an open forum in which to not only learn about funding and project collaboration opportunities, but also to listen to the challenges they face, and continue to brainstorm how to best address their needs.
 - Planning/design and maintenance cost being allowable uses under the Local Government Implementation Funding carve out of the Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant funding.
 - Estimate annual maintenance cost for a single lifespan of the BMP and allow the municipality to count that as match toward the project.
 - Work with counties and municipalities to secure conservation easements in the future annexation areas of the municipal comprehensive plan.

District of Columbia



Local Government

- State/County/City all in one!
- Elected mayor serves as executive. Councilmembers (13 total) serve as legislators.
- 345 Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners (ANCs) each represent a Single Member District (SMD) - hyper local form of government.
- Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) oversees water resource management, including Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration efforts.



Reflections on Local Government

- **Successes**

- Defining leads
- Focusing on the most relevant Goals and Outcomes areas
- Highlighting successes
- Continuous engagement and tailored outreach

- **Challenges**

- Limited capacity from both implementers, and elected councilmembers and ANC's
- Limited understanding of the role of urban legislators in watershed restoration efforts

- **Lessons Learned**

- Continuous engagement and tailored outreach are vital to buy in

- **Opportunities**

- Government and implementers are very close together (flat structure); engagement with implementers is very effective and often easier than engagement with ANC's

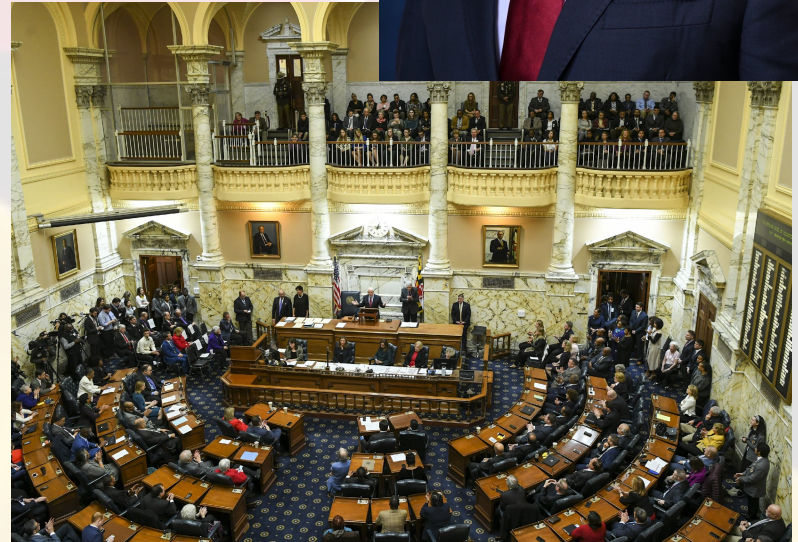
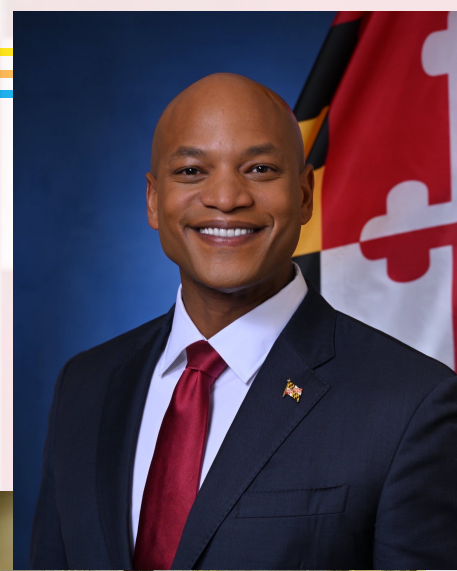


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Maryland

State Government

- Wes Moore is the 63rd Governor of Maryland.
- Maryland's 448th Legislative Session will begin on January 14, 2026; this is a 90-day legislative session.
- Maryland has an executive budget model where the governor proposes a budget; the legislative branch can cut, restrict, or add to the budget for particular purposes so long as the total appropriation does not exceed the proposed appropriation by the governor.
- The General Assembly has 188 members, with 47 senators and 141 delegates. One senator and three delegates are elected from each of the 47 legislative election districts.



Local Government

- Maryland is a home rule state that gives significant flexibility to local governments.
- Counties
 - 23 counties total, plus one independent city (Baltimore) which operates much like a county.
 - 21 are entirely in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and the other 2 are partially in the watershed.
 - Three options for county government: 1) County Commission with legislative and executive functions, 2) County Council with legislative and executive functions, appointed County Administrator, and 3) County Council with legislative functions and County Executive.
 - Counties are responsible for elections, public health, land use planning, public safety, parks and recreation, education and more.
 - Significant portions of all counties are unincorporated.
- Municipalities
 - Towns, Villages, and Cities (one independent city).
 - 157 total municipalities, including 149 in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
 - With the exception of the one independent city (Baltimore), municipalities have overlapping jurisdiction with counties.
 - Municipal leadership structure varies, but options include Commission, Weak-Mayor, Strong-Mayor, and Council-Manager. In smaller jurisdictions, legislative and executive functions are often combined. In larger jurisdictions, they are divided up among a council/commission and a mayor.
 - Municipalities are responsible for public safety, public works, recreation, zoning, and more.

Engagement with Local

- Pre-2008: MD Tributary Strategies Program Partnerships
 - Engage and advance planning and implementation
- Post-2009: Coordinate Outreach with Watershed Assistance Collaborative
 - Partnership (MDE, UMD, DNR, CBT) for TA, financial assistance
- Regional Partnerships Coordination
 - e.g., Severn, Choptank, Anacostia
- 2016-2019: 16 regional WIP development meetings, plus
 - MACo, MS4, other meetings
 - Met with each county staff (LG & ag): What can you do?
- Partner Agencies: MD DNR, MDE, MDA, and MDP
 - Some agencies fund circuit riders/restoration specialists that work with local governments
- DNR's Watershed and Climate Service: Provides technical and fiscal assistance to communities and local governments
 - Partnerships: with CBT to boost capacity building/outreach [CBI/CBO]
 - Planning/design grants: Outcome 2 & 3, Watershed Assistance Grant Program
- DNR's Coastal Training Program provide workshops and technical trainings
- MDE: Funding, TA for wastewater, stormwater, septic

Reflections on Local Government



Successes:

- Regional networks and collaboratives work well to boost shared goals and funds
- County-level meetings with local governments and agriculture
- Regional Watershed Specialists and Circuit Rider Programs fill gaps and provide resources
- Provide grants and TA to local governments

Challenges:

- Reporting & maintenance of BMPs
- Adaptive management funding and capacity
- Getting some tools and resources to small communities
- Grant management and fiscal requirements can be difficult
- The planning process and start up pieces need more focus/assistance

***What do you need
from state
agencies?***

Lessons Learned:

- Be clear about expectations: What are local governments expected to do? What is changing?
- The need for Community Liaisons/Ambassadors to assist with towns and community roles and outreach is needed, and showing real promise via Envision the Choptank
- Providing trainings, other engagement opportunities at regional-small scale level is very valuable

Opportunities

- Local governments: keep implementing WIP.
- Identify existing successful models that can transfer to other communities.
- Translating data and information into tangible outcomes/ plans

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Pennsylvania

Local Government

- Dillon's Rule state, but with sweeping authorities delegated to local governments via Municipal Codes.
- Counties
 - 67 counties statewide with 43 counties in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
 - 3 County Commissioners elected per county, serve both legislative and executive functions.
 - Responsible for land use planning, elections, human services, courts, emergency services, tax assessment, transportation, and more.
- Municipalities
 - 57 Cities (first, second, and third class) with 16 in the watershed.
 - 956 Boroughs (small towns) with 379 in the watershed.
 - 1,546 Townships (first and second class) with 796 in the watershed.
 - Cities/Boroughs have Mayors (executive) and Councils (legislative).
 - Townships have Commissioners or Supervisors that serve both legislative and executive functions.
 - Responsible for roads, public safety including police and firefighters, land use and zoning, drinking water, sewer, stormwater, trash/recycling collection, and more.

Every part of Pennsylvania is 'incorporated', so every person lives in both a municipality and a county

Engagement with Local



Countywide Action Plan (CAP) Program:

- Through a voluntary process, DEP worked with 34 counties to develop and implement locally focused Countywide Action Plans.
- DEP developed the Chesapeake Bay CAP Block Grant.
- This program provides implementation funds along with funding for a CAP Coordinator for every county. This coordinator's role is to connect with local municipalities and program to promote the CAP.

Conservation District Support Section:

- Manages \$9.5+ million in annual funding for Pennsylvania's County Conservation Districts.
- The section also oversees regional DEP Conservation District Field Representatives in delivering administrative and technical assistance to County Conservation Districts.

Engagement with Local



MS4 Program:

- o Before the MS4 Program issues a draft PAG-13 General Permit, it convenes a PAG-13 Stakeholder Workgroup to inform the development of the draft permit. This workgroup typically includes multiple municipal representatives.
- o Prior to issuing an MS4 permit, notice is provided in the PA Bulletin that the permit is open for public comment. All public comments are reviewed and considered when developing the final permit and a comment response document is prepared and made available with the final permit.

Act 537 Planning Section:

- o Sewage Advisory Committee (SAC) meetings – meets with the SAC minimally twice per year to hear and discuss any challenges the regulated community is facing and all department proposed rulemakings or policy.
- o Field Work – regional staff routinely engage with Sewage Enforcement Officers, the public, and local governments in the field to discuss program requirements, address any questions, and ensure proper program and Act 537 implementation.

Reflections on Local Government

- **Successes**

- Bottom-up approach
- Development of the Chesapeake Bay CAP Block Grant
- <https://files.dep.state.pa.us/Water/ChesapeakeBayOffice/WIPIII/2025/Healthy%20Waters%20Annual%20Report%20Signed%20Final%209-27-25.pdf>

- **Challenges**

- A main challenge identified by partners has been the multiple application processes to receive state or federal funds
- Need for technical and administrative funding

- **Lessons Learned**

- Early and often engagement
- Dedicated coordinator position

- **Opportunities**

- Clean Water Action Teams
- <https://files.dep.state.pa.us/water/BWRNSM/BayRestoration/Progress/PADEP-Clean-Water-Gathering-2-0-Outcomes-02122025.pdf>



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Virginia

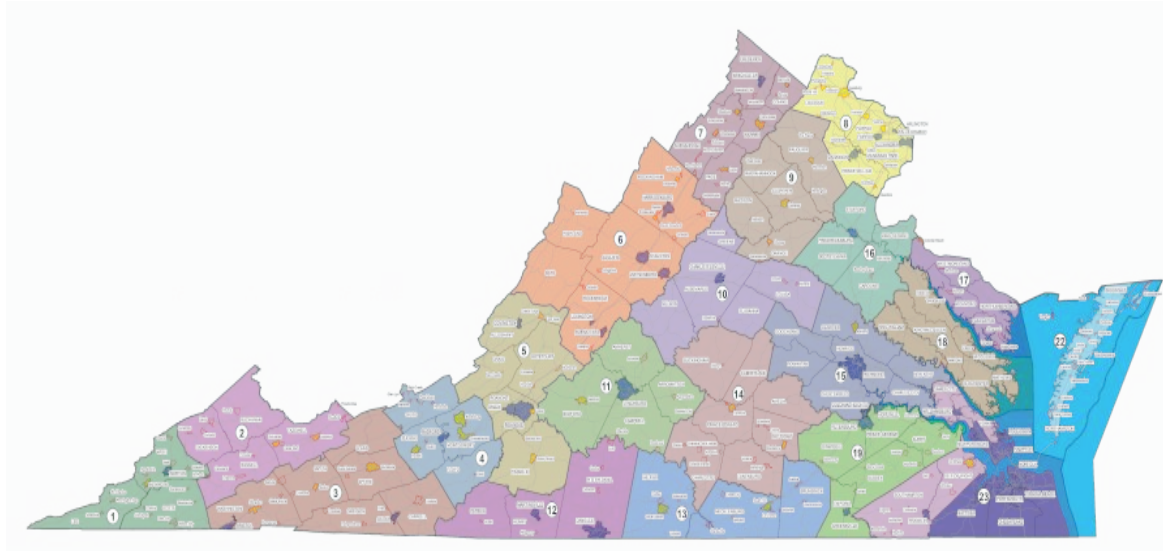
Local Government

- Dillon's Rule state: local governments can only exercise authorities specifically granted to them by the state.
- Counties
 - 95 counties, 70 are at least partially in the watershed.
 - Large portions of each county are unincorporated.
 - Board of Supervisors (3 - 11 total) serve as both legislative and executive. Some elect a chairperson at large. Appoints County Administrator who oversees day to day operations, and a County Attorney.
 - Responsible for health and human services, infrastructure, public amenities, zoning and land use, public safety, and schools.
- Municipalities
 - Total: 38 independent Cities and 190 incorporated Towns.
 - In the Chesapeake Bay watershed: 32 cities, 98 towns.
 - Cities are entirely independent jurisdictions separate from counties and towns.
 - Cities typically have a council that serves a legislative role, a mayor that presides over council meetings, and a city manager who runs daily operations.
 - Cities have a council-manager form of government, with exception of Richmond City who has a "strong mayor-council form of government."
 - Cities are independent so they manage school system and all city operations, for example water quality.
 - Counties have overlapping jurisdictions with towns, but towns are only within counties.
 - Towns typically utilize a 'mayor-council' model with the mayor holding a significant administrative role and the council having a legislative function.
 - Towns share city operations with the county and state.

Engagement with Local

Planning District Commissions

- Provide annual support to 15 Planning District Commissions (PDCs) within Chesapeake Bay watershed.
- Play an essential role in **local leadership, engagement, and education** of local governments on Phase III WIP.
- Support implementation projects through DEQ grants.
- Empower PDCs to focus on regionally-identified needs that align with Bay Agreement goals.



Engagement with Local

Chesapeake Bay Preservation Action (CBPA)

- Conduct regular education, outreach, and technical assistance to CBPA localities and accompanying PDCs.
- Provide financial support to localities for program implementation and septic pump-outs.
- Conduct ordinance reviews, comprehensive plans, and other program or technical documents for localities.
- Provide support for Phase III WIP outreach/education and WIP III implementation support efforts.



Engagement with Local

Watershed Roundtable Groups

- 8 Bay Roundtables
- Host forums or workshops, including local government participation
- Educate citizens
- Participate in the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) planning process, and watershed-wide water quality goals



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West Virginia



Local Government

- West Virginia is a home rule state but it significantly restricts discretion of local governments.
- Counties
 - 55 counties in the state, 11 counties located at least partially in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.
 - Many population centers in WV are unincorporated.
 - Depends on county size, but between 9-12 county commissioners, who can have both legislative and executive functions.
 - Counties are responsible for management of county property, health and human services, road infrastructure, parks and recreation, development and regional planning, and more.
- Municipalities
 - West Virginia has Class I, II, III cities and Class IV towns or villages.
 - 230 incorporated municipalities (cities, towns, villages), including 21 in the watershed.
 - Generally independent, but some services that counties offer overlap with municipalities.
 - Most municipalities have a mayor and 4 - 10 councilmembers.
 - Mayor performs executive functions, councilmembers are the legislative body.
 - Municipalities are responsible for public works, stormwater management, public health and sanitation, public safety, zoning, and more.

Engagement with Local



- Outside of WV's role with LGAC, many state agencies interact with local governments by providing technical assistance, grant funding, and on-the-ground implementation/outreach/education.
- WV's Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), along with many of the sub-agencies within it.
- Region 9 offers grant support, through identifying, writing, submitting, and administering a variety of grants through federal, state, and foundational sources of funding. We cover the Eastern Panhandle, while Region 8 covers another 4 counties in the Watershed.



Thank you!



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