

Updates from the Citizens Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council

1. CAC sent a letter to the EPA after our November 2012 meeting requesting they be more involved in the environment assessment of the Conowingo relicensing process. This request is to help ensure that options are addressed to manage, mitigate or remove sediment accumulation from behind the dam or establish benchmarks for the potential impacts and actions as requested by the State of Maryland and required by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.
 - CAC received a response letter from Shawn Garvin stating the EPA is aware of the sediment build-up behind the dam, that they have had conversations with FERC about it, and that the EPA and Bay Program partners are assessing changes in the dam's trapping capacity as a part of the Mid-point Assessment in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL.
2. CAC received a briefing at our meeting last month on the Technical Report on Toxics Containments in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. CAC is concerned about Toxics, particularly PCBs and toxics that cause intersex fish in the Potomac and Susquehanna. We plan to learn more at a future CAC meeting about what programs are currently in place to reduce toxics and whether we believe a toxics goal should be addressed by the Bay Program partnership. CAC would like to ask the PSC to consider a place holder for a potential Bay Program Toxics outcome in the future.
3. As you know, CAC has been a strong proponent of verification in the Program. We are particularly interested in BMP verification. We have been following the progress of this work by the BMP verification committee and panel and have formed a small CAC workgroup to help with the process. One of this group's first tasks will be to help define operational transparency as a part of BMP verification.
4. Last year, CAC recommended to the Executive Council that there are a few federal partners in the watershed that have impacts on funding and responsibilities for meeting clean-up goals both in the TMDL and the Executive Order. We recommended that the EPA sign Memorandums of Understanding with the U.S. Department of Education, the Office of Surface Mining, and the Bureau of Land Management. These agencies may have funding available for programs like state's environmental literacy plans, reforestation, and land conservation. CAC has decided to invite these federal agencies to a future CAC meeting and learn more about their programs and activities in the watershed, as well as the potential 'pros' and 'cons' of formalizing their partnership with the EPA Bay Program. We will bring our findings and recommendations back to you.