

Draft Charge for Chesapeake Bay Program Plastic Pollution Action Team

In response to the presentation on the STAC workshop on microplastics in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, the Management Board approved the creation of a microplastics action team. The action team will ultimately report to the Management Board, but STAR will play an active role in helping to draft the membership and charge for the action team in early 2020, will help coordinate staffing needs for the team, and will periodically review report-outs from the team.

As background, the 2019 STAC report made the following recommendation:

The Scientific, Technical Assessment and Reporting Team should incorporate development of Ecological Risk Assessments (ERAs) of microplastics into the CBP strategic science and research framework, and the Plastic Pollution Action Team should oversee the development of the ERAs focused on assessment of microplastic pollution on multiple living resource endpoints.

Below is a proposed charge for the Plastic Pollution Action Team (PPAT) to address this recommendation:

The PPAT seeks to reduce the presence and impacts of plastic pollution on the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. The PPAT will begin to address this issue by overseeing research that will help to determine the effects plastics have on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. This will be accomplished through the following actions:

- 1) Oversight of the development of preliminary ecological risk assessments for one or more subwatersheds to the Chesapeake Bay (e.g. Potomac) undertaken by EPA, its contractors, or grantees. For example, this oversight will include advising researchers on assessment endpoints for the ERA, such as restoration goals for species already being addressed by the CBP, and advising on the development of conceptual models in the ERA.
- 2) Using the components and results of the preliminary ERAs to develop a strategy that identifies gaps in information concerning the effects of plastic pollution on the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem, and highlighting future research questions that need to be answered.
- 3) Presenting results from ecological risk assessments to the Management Board in order to guide future action on addressing plastic pollution.

The PPAT will meet periodically to:

- Discuss updates on ecological risk research being conducted by EPA, its contractor, or grantees.
- Provide guidance to EPA on conducting ecological risk research.
- Formulate a science strategy to address questions and research gaps discovered during execution of ecological risk research.
- Report out to STAR for feedback on scientific results from the ERA and updates on the science strategy.