



Beyond 2025 Frequently Asked Questions

1) What does Beyond 2025 mean?

Many of the 31 outcomes in the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* have the year 2025 as the target date in which to meet their goals. At the 2022 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting, a charge was issued to the Principals' Staff Committee to begin thinking about the critical path forward to meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* beyond 2025.

2) What did the Chesapeake Bay Program do to meet this charge?

In summer 2023, a steering committee of 29 people was formed to advise on the development of recommendations to meet the Executive Council charge and a contractor was hired to conduct an independent evaluation of the partnership. In fall 2023, five small topical groups of subject matter experts were convened to offer guidance in the following areas: Clean Water, Climate Change, Healthy Watersheds, People and Shallow Water Habits. The guidance developed by the five small groups and the independent assessment informed the recommendations to meet the charge.

3) Who is represented on the steering committee?

The steering committee includes representatives from each of the *Watershed Agreement* signatories—Chesapeake Bay Commission, Delaware, District of Columbia, Environmental Protection Agency, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia—as well as the federal agencies that participate in the Chesapeake Bay Program (U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and National Park Service), representatives from each of the six Goal Implementation Teams and three advisory committees, and two non-profit organizations.

4) What do the recommendations say?

The steering committee is recommending that the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* be amended and the structure of the partnership be streamlined and simplified.

5) Why not just create a new Watershed Agreement?

One of the overarching principles of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement is a commitment to “adaptively manage at all levels of the Partnership to foster continuous improvement.” The Agreement anticipates the need for adaptation and identifies how goals and outcomes may be adopted or modified in response to new opportunities or concerns. It has been modified twice since 2014. Based on the recommendations synthesized by the Steering Committee, strategic updates to the Agreement can help the Partnership foster continuous improvement without the need to start from scratch or press pause on existing plans, projects and investments.

6) Can I take a look at the source material that went into informing the recommendations?

The source material that was used to help inform these recommendations can be found in Part III of the report.

7) How can I send feedback on these draft recommendations?

Feedback will be accepted from anyone during the 60-day period of July 1–August 30, 2024. It will only be accepted via email to comments@chesapeakebay.net.

8) How will I know if my feedback has been received?

You will receive an acknowledgement email when your comments have been received. If you do not receive an acknowledgement within two business days, please try sending your feedback again.

9) Will I receive responses to my comments?

Due to the extremely tight timeframe in which the steering committee will have to prepare a revised version of the recommendations, they will not be issuing individual responses to the feedback that is received. A red-lined version of the recommendations, as well as a copy of all feedback received, will be posted to chesapeakebay.net for your reference.

10) Who will be reviewing the feedback?

A subsection of the steering committee consisting of subject matter experts in different areas will review the feedback and revise the recommendations as appropriate.

11) What are the next steps for the recommendations?

After public feedback is integrated into the next version of the recommendations, it will be presented to the Management Board and Principals' Staff Committee. The Principals' Staff Committee will use the revised report to inform the recommendations they offer to the Executive Council at their meeting in December.