

Chesapeake Bay Program
Executive Council Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee:
Charting a Course Beyond 2025
DRAFT FOR MANAGEMENT BOARD REVIEW at OCT 10 2024 MEETING

Whereas this is the final meeting of the Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council before the start of 2025, which is the deadline that we collectively set for achieving several of the key outcomes under the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), we, the Chesapeake Executive Council:

- Celebrate the progress made by the partnership toward meeting the goals and outcomes of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* while acknowledging the work remaining to fully achieve our shared vision.
- Recognize that the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed are dynamic, and our work must be responsive to long-established issues; emerging issues such as climate change, population growth, land use changes, Conowingo infill, and historic inequities; and new scientific understandings that have impacted the level of effort needed to meet the partnership's collective restoration priorities.
- Recognize that the Clean Water Act established the Chesapeake Bay Program to improve both water quality and living resources in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for all residents.
- Recognize that the signatories of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* share a vision of a healthy and resilient bay and watershed for the collective benefit of all our residents, while also recognizing that each jurisdiction has unique challenges, resources, opportunities, and goals that support their individual participation and success of the full partnership.
- Recognize that achieving both our individual and collective goals can only and best be realized by remaining grounded in the evolving science, inclusive of all residents and their viewpoints, and together as a strong partnership.
- Commend the Principals' Staff Committee, Chesapeake Bay Program partners, and countless interested and impacted parties in meeting the ["Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond" Charge](#) set forth by this Executive Council in 2022.

Therefore, let it be resolved that we, the Chesapeake Executive Council, in recognition of the consensus-based work of the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee, guided by the findings of their "A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Beyond 2025" report, and our continued commitment to meet the goals of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, hereby direct the Principals' Staff Committee to complete the following by the 2025 Executive Council Meeting:

1. Revisions to the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* with modifications to the existing vision, principles, preamble, goals, and outcomes that reflect:
 - a renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all residents of the watershed as active stewards of a healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay and its watershed,
 - our mandate to address both water quality and living resources throughout the bay and watershed,
 - a grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the current agreement was signed in 2014,
 - goals and outcomes that are as measurable and time-bound as possible. Time frames should accomplish our outcomes, particularly our mandated nutrient and sediment load reductions as quickly as possible, but also recognize the need for ongoing efforts over an approximately 5 year time period,
 - acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is constantly evolving and that our efforts need to constantly adapt accordingly, and
 - the fact that while each partner shares a common goal, we are all approaching that goal from different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities.

It is the intent of the Executive Council that the above changes serve as a revision of the current Agreement, not a new Agreement, and that addressing this charge may involve both the addition of new goals and outcomes, as well as the retirement or consolidation of existing goals and outcomes.

2. A simplified and streamlined structure and process for the partnership, including changes to the [Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program](#), so that all partners are encouraged to achieve their commitments in an effective, efficient, and inclusive manner. It is the expectation of the Executive Council that the partnership work together to make the process of achieving the goals and outcomes of the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* more accessible to watershed residents and more manageable for partnership staff.

Furthermore, we charge the Principals' Staff Committee to conduct the above actions through a transparent and inclusive process that engages not only representatives of our membership, but also the partnership's Advisory Committees, academic and non-profit partners, and the general public.