

November 29, 2024

Dear PSC and Management Board Members,

I hope everyone is having an enjoyable and relaxing Thanksgiving break!

As we all know, the Executive Council will formally issue its Beyond 2025 Charge to us at its annual meeting on December 10. I want to thank everyone for all the work it took us to get to this point, and thank you all in advance for all the work it will take for us to implement the Charge. I particularly want to thank the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Office and the Management Board for not waiting until the Charge is issued, but rather moving forward over the past several weeks to develop a proposed process designed to meet the EC Charge in the time allotted.

I am writing to you today as a “reality check” on what we have before us. Revising both the 2014 Chesapeake Bay and Watershed Agreement and the structure and processes necessary to efficiently implement it will require very close collaboration across the partnership. In doing so, there will be much to consider and many differences of opinion on both substance and process - but those differences of opinion are strengths, not weaknesses, as long as we remain focused on our shared objectives expressed in the EC Charge. There is much good work to do in a very limited time, and so I urge the Management Board to recommend, and for the PSC to approve, a process that is as straight-forward, simple, and Charge-focused as possible. The Charge is a 2-page, very clearly written document, and I am confident that we will be successful and emerge stronger as a partnership if we keep it front of mind in making all our decisions.

Success is also going to require extremely close coordination between the PSC and the Management Board over this period and I strongly recommend that signatory’s PSC members and their respective Management Board members remain in tight communication throughout this process. The Management Board’s next meeting is December 12, at which they will be revising and finalizing their recommendations to the PSC on the process moving forward over the next 18 months. The PSC will take up those recommendations at their next meeting on December 20. Two points relative to these important upcoming meetings:

1. I am planning to make remarks to the Management Board on behalf of the PSC during the first 30 minutes of the December 12 Management Board meeting (9:00 am - 9:30 am). The last 30 minutes of the Management Board meeting (11:30 am - 12:00 pm) will be devoted specifically to a dialogue with PSC members, partners, and the interested public who may have comments or questions on the proposed process. I urge all PSC members to participate if available, particularly between 11:30 am - 12:00 pm. The Agenda, meeting link, etc will be posted to the [Management Board](#) website as soon as they are finalized.
2. Our Governance Document calls for materials related to any decisional agenda items to be posted on the CBP website no less than 2 weeks prior to the meeting at which they will be called for decision. In light of the extremely tight timeframe we have to operate under, I am asking everyone’s flexibility and understanding that requirement simply may not be able to be met in every case. For example, the Management Board will not be able to finalize and post the process recommendations resulting from their Dec 12 meeting until early the following week, which will just be a few days prior to the Dec 20 PSC meeting at which we will be seeking PSC approval. I appreciate your understanding in advance.

Thank you and please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns. Feel free to also reach out to Dave Goshorn (david.goshorn@maryland.gov) or Kristin Saunders (ksaunders@umces.edu).

Best,

Josh Kurtz