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Chesapeake Executive Council begins to chart course to 2025

EPA Administrator elected to serve second term as council chair

Washington, D.C.—Members of the Chesapeake Executive Council gathered for their annual meeting at the headquarters of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on Tuesday. The Council, chaired by EPA Administrator Michael Regan, used their time to discuss the upcoming year of 2025—the target date for which many of the outcomes under the [Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) strive to be achieved.

In June 2014, the Executive Council signed the *Watershed Agreement*, consisting of 10 goals and 31 outcomes, with the vision of fostering an environmentally and economically sustainable watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diversity of engaged residents and stakeholders.

At the meeting, the Council agreed to set a path forward over the next year to outline the necessary steps, and prioritize the actions needed, to meet the targets of the *Watershed Agreement* outcomes. This charge will consider recommendations on how to best address and integrate new science and restoration strategies, as well as emerging issues and changing conditions in the watershed (e.g., climate change). This critical plan is expected to be put into place in time for the 40th anniversary of the Chesapeake Bay Program in 2023.

In addition to the *Watershed Agreement* outcomes, the [Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load](#), or Bay TMDL, calls for 100% of pollution-reducing practices to be put into place by 2025 to ensure the Bay will meet standards for healthy water quality, [as defined by the EPA](#). The EPA recently released a [review of the progress](#) that the seven watershed jurisdictions are making toward this goal.

“The Chesapeake Bay is a vital economic engine and an irreplaceable environmental asset,” said Michael S. Regan, administrator of the EPA. “EPA is honored to join our partners as we work to deliver on our restoration goals, build resilience to climate change and ensure that the benefits of our efforts are shared by all. With the support of historic levels of funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, we will work to advance our collective commitments to a clean Bay and watershed.”

EPA Administrator Michael Regan was unanimously elected by the Council to serve a second-term as Chair. Retiring Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, Ann Swanson, was the keynote speaker for the meeting, where she reflected on her 40 years of service to the Bay, which has included working across political and geographic boundaries to ensure watershed restoration remained a priority when it came to support and funding.

"During the past year, significant legislation and appropriations have been adopted at both the state and federal level to accelerate restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed," said Maryland State Senator Sarah Elfreth, chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission. "New funding initiatives in Pennsylvania, climate legislation in Maryland and efforts to improve resiliency in Virginia—all led by Bay Commission members—collectively benefit our shared challenge and common goals. Coupled with important federal action, these initiatives put us on course to maximize our progress to 2025 and beyond."

Members and designees of the Executive Council also heard from Dr. Kandis Boyd, director of EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office. In her remarks, she reflected on the important work undertaken by the watershed jurisdictions over the past year, praising them for their ongoing leadership in working to meet these critical milestones and for the many

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significant improvements made to the agricultural sector.

Additionally, Dr. Boyd unveiled the [2021-2022 Bay Barometer: An Annual Report on the State of the Program and the Health of the Bay](#), offering a snapshot of the Chesapeake Bay Program’s activities and accomplishments over the past year. In particular, the most recent Bay Barometer provides data updates for the following *Watershed Agreement* outcomes: 2025 Watershed Implementation Plans, Blue Crab Abundance, Forest Buffers, Oysters, Public Access Sites, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV), Sustainable Schools, Toxic Contaminants Policy & Prevention and Water Quality Standards and Attainment. For information on the most up-to-date progress for all 31 outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement*, please visit [ChesapeakeProgress](#).

Established 39 years ago, the [Chesapeake Executive Council](#) is responsible for guiding the policy agenda and conservation and restoration goals for the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#), a regional watershed partnership. Members include the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission and the administrator of the EPA on behalf of the federal government.

“To protect our region’s greatest natural asset, the State of Maryland has made historic investments in Bay restoration activities, and we remain fully committed to our EPA-approved Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan, which gets us to our goals by 2025,” said Maryland Governor Larry Hogan. “Through continued state leadership, federal support, and public-private partnerships, we can continue to address emerging challenges and make sure each jurisdiction is doing its part to meet this generational imperative. It has been a great honor to serve on the Chesapeake Executive Council, and I am proud of the progress we have made together to save this national treasure.”