

**2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Revisions**  
**PSC Suggestions: Version 4**  
Vision, Preamble, and Principles

The Chesapeake Executive Council's [Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course Beyond 2025](#) tasks the PSC with making revisions to the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) by the end of 2025. The PSC's first step will be to evaluate the Agreement's Vision, Preamble, and Principles and determine what changes may be necessary to update the sections according to the direction of the Executive Council, which has indicated that any changes should reflect:

- A renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all communities of the watershed as active stewards of a healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay and its watershed;
- Our mandate to address water quality and living resources throughout the Bay and watershed;
- Elevating conservation as a key pillar of the Chesapeake Bay Program, alongside science, restoration, and partnership;
- A grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the current Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement was signed in 2014;
- Goals and outcomes that are measurable and time bound. Time frames should be sufficient to accomplish the outcomes as quickly as possible. In particular, our regulated nutrient and sediment load reductions, especially those within non-point sources;
- Acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is continuously 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 this goal from different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities.

On the following pages are the *2014 Agreement's* Vision, Preamble, and Principles - original text is shown in black with suggested revisions noted in green. Signatories have provided feedback and suggested amendments over four iterations.

**VISION:**

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable and resilient Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved and healthy working lands, ~~access to the water,~~ a vibrant cultural heritage and a ~~diversity~~ wide range of engaged stakeholders individuals whose communities enjoy access to the waters and natural landscapes of the region. .

**PREAMBLE:**

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is one of the most extraordinary places in America, spanning six states and the District of Columbia. As the nation's largest and ~~one of the~~ most productive estuaries in the world, the Chesapeake Bay and its vast network of more than 180,000 miles of streams, creeks and rivers, holds tremendous ecological, cultural, economic, historic and recreational value for the ~~nearly~~ more than 18 million people who live, work and play in the region.

To restore, ~~conserve~~ and protect this national treasure, the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership was formed in 1983 when the Governors of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency signed the first *Chesapeake Bay Agreement*. That initial agreement recognized the "historical decline of living resources" in the Chesapeake Bay and committed to a cooperative approach to "fully address the extent, complexity and sources of pollutants entering the Bay." For more than ~~30~~ 40 years, this regional partnership has ~~become~~ been recognized as one of the nation's premier estuarine restoration, ~~conservation~~ and protection efforts, implementing policies, engaging in scientific investigation and coordinating actions among the states, the District of Columbia and the federal government.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners have made much progress in that time, ~~but~~ and there is still more to do— especially in the face of continued challenges such as ~~changes~~ increasing population, loss of farm and forest lands, ~~declining fish and wildlife resources,~~ threats to biodiversity, emerging contaminants and changing environmental conditions. Through the ~~2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (the "Agreement")~~, the partnership ~~is~~ remains committed to restoring, protecting and conserving the Bay and its watershed ~~restoration through~~ effort based in and guided by science and ~~responsive to~~ the lessons learned from our ~~past and shared~~ experiences.

One of the most important lessons the partners have learned from the past ~~three~~ four decades is that although watershed-wide partnerships can help to coordinate and catalyze progress, implementation ~~happens~~ is locally inspired and driven. Local governments, ~~tribes, are key partners in our work, as the public communities,~~ businesses, watershed groups and other non-governmental organizations are key partners in our work. Working together to engage, empower and facilitate these partner networks will leverage resources and ensure better outcomes for all watershed communities.

The partnership's experience with watershed restoration, ~~conservation~~ and protection efforts has shown that measurable ~~results~~ progress, coupled with ~~firm~~ clear accountability, yield the most ~~significant~~ effective results. The partnership ~~stands ready~~ continues to embrace new ideas, technologies and policies that will help meet ~~its~~ our goals. ~~The partnership is~~ We are committed to improving ~~verification~~ accountability, ~~and transparency of its actions and outreach~~ to strengthen and increase public confidence in ~~its efforts our work~~.

The 1983 *Chesapeake Bay Agreement* laid the foundation for a cooperative program that included four jurisdictions along with the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the federal government. ~~This new Agreement includes the~~ Since 2014, the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* has included all seven jurisdictions in the watershed, ~~bringing with~~ New York, West Virginia and Delaware ~~on board with~~ joining the original signatories ~~and making them as~~ full partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program and the

Chesapeake Executive Council. ~~Due in part to a 2009 Presidential Executive Order,~~ Numerous federal agencies ~~have~~ also ~~reaffirmed and augmented~~ continue their longstanding ~~and shared~~ commitment to restoring, ~~conserving~~ and protecting the Chesapeake Bay.

This *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* acknowledges that the partnership cannot address every issue at once and that progress must be made in a strategic manner, focusing on efforts ~~that~~ will achieve the most ~~meaningful and~~ cost-effective results. Watershed restoration, ~~conservation~~ and protection ~~have the potential to become integral~~ are integral drivers of the region's economy, ~~health and culture~~. To that end, the partnership is committed to achieving success while maximizing the ~~community and~~ economic benefits ~~to local communities~~ across the ~~region~~ watershed. The signatories to this voluntary agreement commit to achieving the restoration, ~~conservation~~ and protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, ~~and~~ its ~~water, habitats~~ and living resources ~~for the benefit of all people living in and visiting this nationally treasured watershed.~~

#### **PRINCIPLES:**

The ~~following principles are an overarching framework by which the~~ Chesapeake Bay Program commits to operate. ~~They encompass under the following principles, which reflect the partners' collective, core values, and are intended to help~~ The principles guide ~~us in our~~ the work ~~as of~~ the partnership ~~as we~~ develop policy and takes ~~actions~~ to achieve the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's* Goals and Outcomes.

The partnership will:

- **Collaborate** to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- **Achieve Goals and Outcomes** in a ~~measurable and~~ timely way and at the least possible cost to the public.
- **Represent the interests of people all communities** throughout the watershed fairly and effectively, ~~including a broad diversity of cultures, demographics and ages.~~
- **Use place-based approaches**, where appropriate, ~~that to target specific geographic areas and~~ produce recognizable benefits to local communities while contributing to larger ecosystem goals.
- **Acknowledge, support and embrace local governments** and other local entities in watershed restoration, ~~conservation~~ and protection activities.
- **Operate with transparency** in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting on progress to strengthen public trust and confidence in our efforts.
- **Use science-based decision-making and seek out innovative technologies and approaches** to support sound management decisions in a changing system.
- **Maintain and enhance a coordinated watershed-wide monitoring and research program** to support decision-making, ~~and~~ track progress and ~~assess~~ the effectiveness of management actions.
- **Anticipate and respond to changing conditions**, including long-term trends in sea level, temperature, precipitation, land use and other variables.
- **Adaptively manage** at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement ~~informed by the best available science and strong working relationships.~~
- **Seek consensus across the partnership** when making decisions.
- **Meaningfully engage the public** to foster collaboration and ~~increase the number and diversity of people who grow the partnership to~~ support and carry out the ~~conservation and~~ restoration, ~~conservation and protection~~ activities necessary to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- **Integrate Tribal Nations into the partnership** in a manner that appropriately considers their unique status as Independent Sovereign Nations.

**Commented [1]:** These bullets were moved up in the order based on their emphasis in the EC Charge and "Charting a Course" report.

- **Explore using Integrate social science holistically throughout the partnership** to better understand and measure how human behavior can drive natural resource use, management and decision-making.
- **Promote environmental justice** through the meaningful involvement and fair treatment of all people, regardless of race, color, national origin or income, in the implementation of this agreement.

**Commented [2]:** Some signatories have requested to remove this principle, to which others have objected.

**Commented [3R2]:** An alternative that has been proposed is "Promote the meaningful involvement and fair treatment of all people in the implementation of this Agreement."