



Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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October 29, 2024

The Honorable Wes Moore
Governor of Maryland
Chair, Chesapeake Executive Council
100 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21404
Sent via email: wes.moore@maryland.gov

Dear Governor Moore,

On behalf of the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council (EC), we are excited to meet with you and other EC members in Annapolis, MD on December 10, 2024. The Stakeholders' Committee is one of few non-governmental voices within the formal structure of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP). The Stakeholders' Committee was established in 1984 to provide advice to the leadership of the federal/state CBP partnership on policies and programs impacting residents in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The membership is 28 volunteers representing a sample of stakeholders including: restoration practitioners, farmers, retired government officials, environmental philanthropy, policy researchers and contractors, land conservationists, environmental justice advocates, community organizers, watershed organizations and educators.

Over the last year, our members have been very engaged in the CBP's efforts considering the critical path forward for the partnership beyond 2025. We strongly support a key recommendation from Beyond 2025 Steering Committee for the Executive Council to affirm its continued commitment to meet the goals of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Watershed Agreement)* and direct the Principals' Staff Committee to propose specific amendments necessary to effectively implement the *Watershed Agreement*.

As your advisors it is our view that amending the *Watershed Agreement* gives the partnership the opportunity to adapt to what the Chesapeake Bay Program has learned since 2014. It positions the partnership to better develop outcomes that are responsive to our changing environment and stressors, like the impacts of population growth and land use changes. As the jurisdictions did during the development of the *2014 Watershed Agreement*, each signatory still has the choice to focus on the outcomes most appropriate to their region. For 41 years the Chesapeake Bay Program has been the hub of Chesapeake Bay watershed science and policy. In the years to come and with thoughtful, stakeholder-informed

amendments, we see a renewed *Watershed Agreement* as the opportunity to advance living resources response to water quality programs, an increased focus on land conservation, and a concerted effort to center all people in the collective goal for a healthy, sustainable watershed.

We offer our sincere gratitude to you and your Secretary of Natural Resources, Josh Kurtz. We are encouraged by his vision and leadership with the Chesapeake Bay Program's Principals' Staff Committee as a reflection of your Administration's commitment to the Chesapeake Bay and the quality of life of our region's residents.

Sincerely,



Dr. Chuck Herrick
Chair, Stakeholders' Advisory Committee

cc: Secretary Josh Kurtz, MD DNR