

CHAIR Nikki Tinsley Maryland

January 3, 2012

VICE CHAIR John Dawes Pennsylvania

Dear Principals' Staff Committee:

Bill Achor Pennsylvania

As your citizen advisors, we respectfully offer our recommendations for action that you can take now to increase public trust in your process of expending scarce public resources on restoring our national treasure, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Having been deeply involved with the Program deliberations since the initial discussions of the value of Independent Evaluation, we believe that we have credibility and perspective to offer these recommendations.

Nancy L. Alexander Virginia

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Christy Everett Virginia

C. Victor Funk Pennsylvania

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Charlie Stek Maryland

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Neil Wilkie Maryland We understand that there has been some resistance to the idea of external evaluation. However, we agree with those that recognize its importance and acknowledge that accountability is a critical issue right now. During our meeting discussions we often ask "Why is the bay not getting better?" It seems as though we are merely holding the line in some areas while losing ground in others. CAC believes there are three possible answers: 1) We are not doing what we say we are, 2) we are doing the wrong things, or 3) we are not doing enough. Herein lies the importance of independent evaluation as opposed to only relying on adaptive management. While we are still unsure what the Chesapeake Bay Program (Program) specifically means by adaptive management and how it will occur, the practice still implies *internal assessment* and correction of actions. These are certainly critical components to program implementation, but by its nature, internal adaptive management can inhibit new thinking, new ideas and potential innovations that could ignite an acceleration of progress that the twenty-plus years of the restoration effort honestly requires to finally meet the clean-up goals.

Analysis of Bay progress cannot be fully conducted without being able to determine whether practices are being implemented as reported. When that can be determined within a reasonable standard, then management actions can be adapted to adjust the type and volume of practices necessary to accelerate progress and more effectively utilize scarce funding. In sum, external review can identify needed improvements with a discipline and mandate that saves tax payers' money and improves program performance in the long term.

Furthermore, it is our belief that the Chesapeake Bay Program cannot afford to be seen by the public, Congress or the state legislatures as unwilling to adopt recommended measures from a well respected independent scientific body, the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), to improve its accountability through adoption of a mechanism of external review.



The NAS study identified some very critical actions that must be taken to allow the Program to identify how funding could be better targeted and areas that lack accountability that must be addressed in order to gain the full effect of the dollars expended on restoration activities.

The Citizens Advisory Committee recommends that the Program begin implementation of the NAS recommendations by identifying short and long term actions including directing the Program to accelerate action to implement the provision in the Regional Administrator's November 3, 2011 memo to "....bring forward through the Partnership a set of integrated recommendations for a comprehensive BMP tracking; verification and reporting system (#11).

In conclusion, we believe that the Program cannot afford to be without an independent means to evaluate its progress and urge the PSC to continue to advance the discussion on how best to institutionalize independent, external evaluation of the Bay Program. We offer our assistance in whatever way best serves the Partnership's efforts in this matter.

Sincerely,

Nikki L. Tinsley

Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee

CC: Nick DiPasquale