



**Citizens Advisory Committee
Meeting Minutes
May 21, 2020
Virtual Meeting (Zoom)**

CAC Members Present: Chanté Coleman, John Dawes, Andrew Der, Bill Dickinson, Matt Ehrhart (CAC Chair), Bill Fink, Verna Harrison, Charles Herrick, Ann Jurczyk, Anna Killius, Julie Lawson, David Lillard, Mike Lovegreen, Joe Maroon, Bill Matuszeski, Charlie Stek, Kendall Tyree, and CAC Staff Jessica Blackburn and Adam Bray

Speakers/Guests Present: Karl Blakenship, Meg Cole, Ola Davis, Jim Edward, Rachel Felter, Kate Fritz, Annabel Harvey, Lara Lutz, Surili Patel, Jennifer Starr, Kathy Stecker, Ann Swanson,

Meeting presentations and materials are located at:

https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/event/citizens_advisory_committee_quarterly_meeting_may_2020

Thursday, May 21, 2020

The CAC Chair, Matt Ehrhart, called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He welcomed CAC to its first virtual meeting, gave an overview of the agenda, and highlighted the meeting goal: to provide suggestions to the CAC Executive Committee for their annual recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council. The agenda also included three guest speakers on topics related to the impacts of COVID-19 on watershed restoration and time to discuss the notices of intent to sue the EPA.

Chesapeake Bay Program Updates

Jim Edward, Associate Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program.

Jim briefed CAC members about potential impacts of COVID-19 on the Chesapeake Bay Program reporting and goals. The EPA remains committed to achieving the 2025 goals of the TMDL and expects to meet all of the deadlines. The EPA has checked-in with jurisdictions and state agencies about potential impacts and delays in meeting their deadlines. Some states indicated potential delays because of the virus. The jurisdictions have until June 1st to submit their final 2021 programmatic milestones to the EPA and must post them to their websites no later than June 13th. The EPA will post their final evaluations by the end of July. Some jurisdictions expressed difficulty in coordinating on-the-ground BMP implementation and verification. This may delay the Quality Assurance Program Plans (QUAPPs) submission of their final 2021 programmatic milestones. The EPA has given a one-year extension to the grants for most of the states and other partners.

Jim updated CAC on the Bay Program budget. The \$6 million increase designated for “state-based implementation in the most effective basins” will focus primarily on reducing nitrogen through agriculture BMPs, with most of the effective basins located in Pennsylvania. Jim also updated CAC on the Bay Program’s Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice (DEIJ) Strategy and Statement that emphasizes the importance of both DEIJ to the partnership and the need to build it into all of

our programs, activities, goals and outcomes. It also makes reference to the health disparities and disproportionate impacts to underrepresented and diverse communities. The Executive Council is expected to sign this at their next meeting.

Discussion:

CAC suggested the Bay Program tracks the number of State, local and federal jobs associated with its funding and how showing impact on economic growth may be helpful when advocating continued funding in the future. Members also discussed whether States reported any other areas of slow down beyond Ag BMPs. Jim explained that Ag BMPs were the only specific example that states highlighted but thought more details would be discussed about this at the May 22nd PSC meeting.

COVID-19 Impacts on the Bay Watershed

Ann Swanson, Executive Director, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Ann reminded the CAC about the Chesapeake Bay Commission and spoke to her insights on impacts of COVID-19 on the watershed including budget challenges for MD, PA and VA. All three states have significant shortfalls due to the virus that will impact the budget for years. Additionally, social distancing measures are causing states to miss out on the prime season for planting and construction of BMPs. It is unclear what effect this will have long-term.

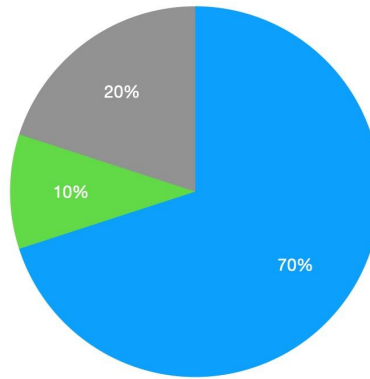
Ann also talked about cascading impacts. Air quality, for example, is benefiting from a decrease in emissions as people travel less and work from home. Fish, on the other hand, may be impacted negatively as fisheries struggle. Since people primarily care about fish because they eat them, we need fisheries and markets for seafood to be successful in order to drive conservation. Farming is also struggling as the virus has spread through many processing plants. With the threat of future budget cuts, Ann highlighted the need to stay the course and not backtrack on progress made because of COVID. She recommended supporting technical assistance to maintain the BMPs that are already in place so we do not lose ground.

Discussion:

CAC members discussed possible impacts of COVID-19 on local government funding of clean water projects, the possibility of the TMDL deadline being extended beyond 2025, and whether there has been any science reporting that relates water quality improvements with less cars on the road since more people are staying home. CAC also discussed the challenges of Pennsylvania meeting their reduction goals. Ann pointed out the need to approach PA on their own terms and focus projects on flooding issues and protecting the water in PA's rivers instead of the Chesapeake Bay itself.

What potential COVID-19 impact to Bay Restoration?

State and Local Government Budget
Compliance and Enforcement
Agricultural BMP Verification
Federal Budgets
State 2-Year Milestones
BMP Verification



Introduction to Public Health and the Environment

*Surili Patel, Director, Center for Climate, Health and Equity,
American Public Health Association*

CAC Vice-Chair, Julie Lawson, introduced Surili to CAC and briefed the group on a proposed CAC-hosted public, virtual panel on the topic of public health and the environment. Surili has been reaching out to potential panelists and everyone is enthusiastic about the idea. Julie invited members to think through potential questions that CAC would like to see the panelists address during the panel.

Surili began by describing the American Public Health Association (APHA), her roles there, and introduced the topic of environmental health. Environmental health is a branch of public health that focuses on the intersection of people and the environment. It takes a holistic approach, fosters healthy communities and advances policies and programs that reduce chemical and other environmental exposures that negatively affect human health. Environmental health also focuses on environmental racism and inequalities. She described APHA's vision of having a nationwide, interconnected system for environmental health that would give communities the tools and resources to be resilient during disasters and outbreaks like COVID. This system would include multiple disciplines and sectors and have an integrated infrastructure to track crucial information about the environment and how it relates to health.

Discussion:

CAC discussed the potential program and individuals that Surili has recommended for the virtual panel. CAC members talked about public health and what it entails. Surili explained that she sees public health as a prevention measure that includes all of the people, practices and systems that can help protect people and communities and make them healthier and more resilient.

Chat Comments:

I would like the panel to simulate an investigation into something like tracing an illness to drinking water. Just how they work, and how they collaborate. Thanks!

I enthusiastically endorse the idea of a CAC Public/Environmental Health CAC sponsored event. At a time when there is active debate and controversy of the balance between public health and economic health and along with the challenge of a pervasive diminishing of scientific evidence by some of our constituents, addressing both of these things would be helpful outcomes – to make the connection of environmental health with public health both from a wellness perspective as well as a resultant economic perspective and to make the point in a visceral manner that reinforces the science.

Business Meeting and CAC Discussion

CAC voted to adopt the draft February 2020 meeting minutes as submitted.

The CAC chair opened the floor for discussion regarding the two recent notices of intent to sue the EPA. One notice was filed by VA, DC and MD and addresses EPA's failure to ensure that the Phase III WIPs of PA and NY meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. The other notice is similar and filed by the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and some of their partners. Members discussed the challenges facing PA and the need to focus on existing conservation practices first before adding new ones. Members were concerned that the notices might give the impression that the partnership is breaking and explored the possibility of making a statement supporting the partnership during the May 22nd PSC meeting. If given the chance, Matt agreed to make a statement that would reaffirm the importance and uniqueness of the partnership and highlights that everyone has a lot of work to do and needs to help one another.

Jess shared that the Executive Council Planning Team is considering a COVID-19 theme for the annual EC meeting on August 18th. The current thinking for this format would entail the EC members addressing some of the challenges in their jurisdictions because of COVID and then participate in a larger discussion about how Bay restoration can help the economy and job creation. There are two documents working their way through the Bay Program that the EC members may recognize at the meeting – 1) a revised forest restoration strategy signed by state foresters and the US Forest Service Chief, and 2) the Bay Program's DEIJ Statement that the EC members would be asked to sign. CAC members agreed that they should weigh-in on the importance of the DEIJ statement.

Review of Past 3 Years of CAC Recommendations

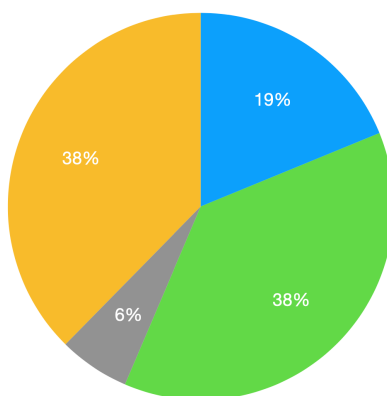
Chuck Herrick, CAC Stewardship Subcommittee Chair

Chuck presented a chart showing the letters and recommendations CAC has made to the EC and other CBP leadership over the past 3 years. He highlighted the breadth of topics and those that have been repeated throughout the years. Chuck grouped these themes in 5 categories: 1)

commenting on the general efficacy of the Bay Program, 2) Environmental Education/Literacy, 3) Verification, 4) Budget/Funding, and 5) Buffers. He pointed out that in addition to these repeated messages, CAC also responds to important challenges and opportunities when they come up. Chuck proposed that by critically reflecting on the topics CAC has submitted through reports and letters over the past three years, members can deliberate whether these are the topics that the group wishes to prioritize and whether there are topics that have not been raised often enough, or in the right way.

Based on your thoughts on the Past 3 Years of CAC

- We Do Not Communicate Enough About Our Focus Area
- There are topics about which we've been too silent
- We dilute our message by sending out too many communications
- We Are Not Focused Enough

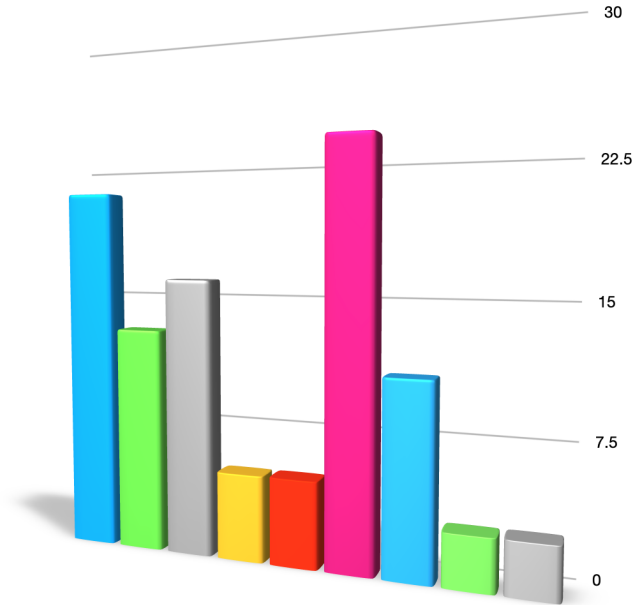
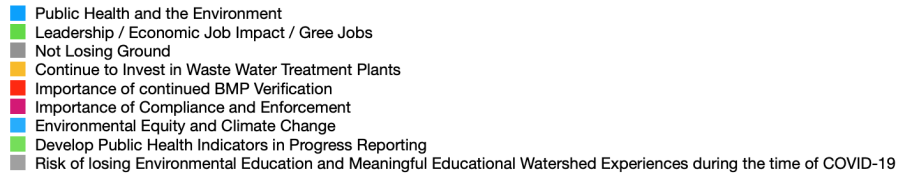


Discussion on Ideas for 2020 CAC Annual Report

Matt Ehrhart, Chair

CAC discussed possible ideas and topics to highlight in the CAC Annual Report to the Executive Council. Members felt that the priority should be given to public health and the environment, as well as communicating the importance of not losing ground and protecting essential functions like monitoring, technical assistance and compliance if budgets are cut in the future. Members also expressed interest in communicating positive solutions that can help both the environment and the economy, like the creation of new green jobs. Other topics raised included climate change, environmental inequity as it relates to public health and climate change, environmental education, and microplastics.

Topics of Recommendations for the CAC Annual Report



Matt updated CAC about a discussion among the Advisory Committee Chairs to create a joint statement about COVID-19 to the EC. He said there was a lot of common ground and the topics discussed align well with CAC's priorities.

Jess outlined the next steps for the annual report and the upcoming virtual panel. For the report, staff will pull together comments and bring them to the Executive Committee. The draft will be shared with the full committee to review and comment. The final report is due on July 21st.

For the potential virtual panel on health and the environment, staff and Julie will confirm a date likely in June and develop a marketing plan. All CAC members are encouraged to attend and help promote. It will be recorded and added to the Alliance website for future viewing.

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 2:36pm.