



Chesapeake Bay Program
A Watershed Partnership

www.chesapeakebay.net

Press Release

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Bay Leaders Adopt Innovative Pollution Reduction and Fisheries Management Strategies to Accelerate Bay Restoration Effort

Washington, D.C. (November 29, 2005) – Chesapeake Bay regional leaders today adopted several measures to accelerate the protection and restoration of the nation’s largest estuary. The initiatives are designed to produce immediate and long-term improvements in the Bay’s health by reducing pollution flowing into the Bay from agricultural areas, improving the management of the Bay’s fisheries and instilling a Bay stewardship ethic among future generations of watershed residents.

“This year has been a turning point for the Chesapeake Bay,” said Chesapeake Executive Council Chair and Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell. “Using scientific studies done since 2000, this year we took aggressive action on behalf of the Bay: mandatory discharge reductions imposed on sewage treatment plants, tough new water quality requirements for farming operations and hundreds of millions of new state dollars dedicated to Bay restoration. The key now is to stay on track, see these ambitious new requirements through and hopefully succeed in securing new and additional support from our partners in Washington.”

Building upon this year’s earlier efforts to lock-in pollution reductions from sewage treatment plants, Executive Council members adopted a new animal manure management strategy that will reduce the amount of nutrient pollution reaching local waters from livestock operations. Poultry litter and animal manure are responsible for about half of the nutrient pollution from agricultural lands. The strategy calls for reducing surplus animal manure and poultry litter by working with farmers to put in place innovative feed management plans, animal waste storage systems, stream fencing and by expanding manure and litter transport systems to areas in need.

During the meeting, leaders from the Bay states also presented U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns with a report outlining the region’s top five priorities for the 2007 Farm Bill. The recommendations are designed to serve as a starting point for further discussions of new ways to improve water quality while strengthening the region’s agricultural economy. The report, “*The 2007 Farm Bill: Concepts for Conservation Reform in the Chesapeake Bay Region*” was developed by the Chesapeake Bay Commission and offered to the U.S. Congress by the Governors of Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the Mayor of the District of Columbia; and the Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

Executive Council members today also adopted a first-of-its-kind framework for expanding traditional single-species fisheries management into an ecosystem-based approach for the Chesapeake Bay.

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Developed by scientists and fisheries managers from the Bay states and the federal government, the Fisheries Ecosystem Plan broadens current management efforts to take into account the linkages among fisheries, habitat and water quality management. The Executive Council agreed to give first priority to the development of ecosystem-based fishery management plans for oysters, striped bass, blue crabs, Atlantic menhaden, and Alosa species such as American shad.

Today's annual meeting was held in collaboration with a National Geographic Summit on Chesapeake Bay Education, where regional experts discussed the future of environmental education in the Bay watershed. Sessions focused on opportunities provided by the upcoming 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement, new directions and technologies in the education arena, and current education practices throughout the watershed. During the final session, Executive Council members, regional school system leaders and environmental education providers signed an agreement to continue to expand Chesapeake Bay stewardship efforts.

The Executive Council – comprised of Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell, Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson, District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams, and Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair Mike Waugh – meets annually to lead restoration efforts throughout the 64,000-square mile Bay watershed.

Executive Council members also elected Governor Ehrlich as its new chair. Governor Ehrlich's term will begin at the conclusion of today's meeting.

"My friend and colleague from Pennsylvania has been an effective leader of the Chesapeake Executive Council. On behalf of all the members, I thank him for his tenure," said Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. "As I look toward my own term as Chair, I see not only great possibilities for improving our Bay, but exciting opportunities to work across state and party lines to get them done."

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to more than 16 million people living in parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Since 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program has coordinated the restoration of the Bay and its watershed.

For copies of Executive Council Directives and additional information on today's actions, visit <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/200511exec.htm>.

Additional Remarks by Chesapeake Executive Council Members

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Executive Council Chair and Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell

“Pennsylvania is accelerating efforts to meet the goals established by the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement and dramatically increasing the amount of funding targeted for water quality initiatives in the Bay watershed. This year, we took an important step toward restoring impaired waters by imposing new nutrient limits in the NPDES permits of 190 significant sewage and industrial dischargers in Pennsylvania.

Our commonwealth finalized extensive water quality regulations for large-scale farms and new manure management requirements for all agricultural operations. The new rules for the first time establish vegetative buffers or setbacks along the edge of streams and close the “export loophole,” requiring farms that import manure to meet the same requirements as the farm that produces the manure. With these sweeping changes, more than 5,000 farms will have full nutrient management plans -- increasing the number of highly regulated farms in Pennsylvania by 600 percent.

Pennsylvania is investing heavily in the Bay restoration effort. We secured \$625 million in new funds through the passage of Growing Greener II that, like the original Growing Greener program, will provide substantial new resources for projects to improve water quality in the Bay watershed. The state's new PennWorks program provides \$250 million to finance upgrades to water and wastewater systems statewide and specifically makes nutrient reduction investments in the Bay watershed a priority. We also have a new nutrient and sediment trading policy that offers farmers, communities and industry another tool to help them meet and exceed state and federal water quality goals. In short, we are moving as aggressively as possible to do our part to bring back the Chesapeake Bay.”

Incoming Executive Council Chair and Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.

“Maryland is proud of the accomplishments we’ve made during the past three years. We’ve passed historic legislation to cut nutrient pollution in the Bay, we’ve proposed unprecedented air quality standards that will lead to improved water quality, and we remain committed to oyster restoration and bay grass replenishment. Our Corsica River Initiative is an unparalleled environmental effort and will serve as a blueprint for the future restoration of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The Chesapeake Bay Program plays a vital role in our regional effort to restore the Bay.”

Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner

“In Virginia, we have stepped up our commitment to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay through the adoption of stringent standards, tough regulations and new funding. We still have work to do, but together with our Chesapeake Bay Program partners we are making significant advances. As we look to the future, our combined efforts to restore this national treasure must not waver.”

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District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams

“Water quality in the Chesapeake Bay depends on the health of all its tributaries, both rural and urban. As Mayor of the District of Columbia, I have made restoring and revitalizing the Anacostia River and its waterfront a top priority. Educating our residents, especially our children, is an important part of achieving our goal. I spoke to a group of elementary school students recently and explained to them that their actions have an impact on our rivers and on the Bay. How many of our constituents understand that if they drop a candy wrapper at a bus stop, it will likely be washed into the river when it next rains?”

I am glad to report that we are making great strides on the restoration of Kingman and Heritage Islands. Soon, what was a contaminated and neglected site will be a natural wildlife recreational area with a LEED platinum environmental education center!

I realize the magnitude of the challenge that lies ahead, and I am confident that we and our Bay partners will be able to reach our common goal of a clean, healthy, and productive Chesapeake Bay.”

Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair and Pennsylvania State Senator Mike Waugh

“Fighting for additional funds to support the on-the-ground efforts of our farmers is critical to restoring the Bay. When four out of five of the region’s landowners who seek funds to help reduce agricultural Bay pollution are turned away due to inadequate funding, we know the system must be fixed. Today’s Farm Bill Report makes common sense recommendations that bring the region’s agricultural health in line with its water quality protection needs. All of our recommendations are good for the Bay, and good for ag producers nationwide.

Bay cleanup plans heavily rely on improving the management of agricultural lands to meet pollution reduction goals. With two-thirds of pollution reductions expected to come from agriculture, we must find new ways to help our farming community.”

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Stephen L. Johnson

“From the high-tech to the common-sense, EPA and our state and local partners are advancing the strategies to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay,” said EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson. “President Bush and the Agency are committed to working in collaboration with our partners in order to accelerate the pace of Bay restoration – ensuring that the next generation can enjoy this national treasure.”