



Endorsement of the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience

The Chesapeake Bay is dependent upon the actions of every citizen in the watershed, both today and in the future. The Bay's future will soon rest in the hands of its youngest citizens. Our students, future Bay leaders, should be armed with the knowledge and skills needed to make informed choices, have a sense of history and excitement about the nation's largest estuary and an understanding of how their individual actions affect this national treasure.

WE REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT to implementing, supporting and evaluating the Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience (MWEE) within the jurisdictions of the Chesapeake Bay watershed in support of the education goals of the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement and Chesapeake Bay Program Education Initiative (Directive No. 98-1).

WE RECOGNIZE that environmental education taught in the context of existing learning standards increases student academic achievement in a variety of subjects. Chesapeake Bay and watershed education also fosters positive attitudes toward environmental stewardship, which is critical in nurturing our next generation of Bay restoration leaders.

WE RECOGNIZE the central, essential role that state and local education agencies play in the goal of providing every student in the watershed with a meaningful watershed educational experience. The involvement and interaction of education administrators at the state, district and individual school levels is fundamental to the success of this initiative, and we applaud the partnerships that have been established and activated thus far.

WE BELIEVE that the multi-jurisdictional Chesapeake Bay Program provides critical assistance to jurisdictions in providing meaningful watershed educational experiences for our students.

WE THEREFORE COMMIT to:

- Providing every student in the watershed with a meaningful watershed educational experience before graduation from high school that illustrates the interaction of the natural and social sciences in determining environmental quality and policy.
- Working with state legislatures and Congress to secure funding for implementation.
- Assuring active representation from our Departments of Education in the Chesapeake Bay Program Education Workgroup to help reach our common goals.
- Reconvening jurisdictional working groups chaired by a representative of our Departments of Education, which bring together representatives from natural resource agencies, not-for-profits and environmental centers to coordinate and lead the implementation and tracking of meaningful watershed educational experiences within the jurisdictions. These jurisdictional working groups should:
 - Participate actively in the assessment of Chesapeake Bay education and teacher professional development programs to ensure delivery of high-quality programming.
 - Attend the biennial Education Summit to bring state interests and needs to the attention of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

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