



Chesapeake Bay Program
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News Release

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Chesapeake Executive Council Chooses Maryland's Governor O'Malley as Next Chair

Past Chair, Mayor Vincent Gray, Commended for His Local Actions for the Bay

Washington, D.C. – Today, Maryland's Governor Martin O'Malley became the new chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council, taking over the leadership role from the District of Columbia's Mayor, Vincent C. Gray. O'Malley vowed to continue the positive momentum of the Chesapeake Bay Program and lead the regional partnership into a new era of progress and accountability.

"I thank my fellow council members for the opportunity to once again take the helm of this partnership, and to help get a new Bay agreement signed, sealed and delivered to the 18 million souls who call the Chesapeake's Watershed home," said Governor O'Malley. "We have only one planet to sustain us, and one Chesapeake Bay standing at the heart of our environment, our economy and our way of life. The commitments we make today will define its future, creating the resource that our children and grandchildren will come to know."

At the Executive Council press conference, held at the National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., Mayor Gray, the outgoing chair, recognized the importance of thirty years of collaboration and progress by the Chesapeake Bay Program partners and the need to plan for the future.

"Over the last eighteen months, Bay Program partners have continued to work in the spirit of collaboration that is the hallmark of our thirty-year-old partnership. Today, using our solid history of science and restoration experience, it is incumbent upon us to work diligently and create a successful new direction forward for the partnership," said Mayor Gray. "I am pleased to have been Chair during this time and look forward to continuing our collaborative efforts under Governor O'Malley's leadership."

Governor O'Malley served two consecutive terms as Chesapeake Executive Council Chair in 2007 and 2008, leading the partnership to develop two-year milestones for reporting progress and accountability, and spearheading Maryland efforts to meet TMDL goals and milestones for cleaner waters. Under his leadership, the State created the Chesapeake and Atlantic Coastal Bays Trust Fund, an expansive program that targets restoration projects that reduce non-point source pollution; developed BayStat, an innovative tracking tool that now serves as a national model for publicly tracking, targeting and publicizing restoration efforts; and has undertaken the largest eastern oyster restoration effort of its kind.

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Recognized nationally for his environmental leadership, Governor O'Malley received the first- ever vision award from the National Arbor Day Foundation in 2012, and was honored by the North American Association of Environmental Educators recently for his work on environmental literacy. In October, the Maryland League of Conservation Voters honored the Governor with its inaugural Climate Visionary award. In November, President Obama appointed Governor O'Malley to his task force on climate preparedness.

The Chesapeake Executive Council chair was transferred from District of Columbia's Mayor Vincent Gray, who held the position since July 2012. Members of the Executive Council commended Mayor Gray for his Sustainable DC initiative, a District Government-led plan to make the city the healthiest, greenest, most livable city in the United States, and his actions on Bay issues. Under his leadership during the past year, the District has exceeded goals including the removal of 16,000 pounds of trash from the Anacostia River and the planting of more than 8,800 trees throughout the city. Additionally, the District has effectively retrofitted approximately 875,000 square feet of impervious surfaces to capture stormwater runoff and has promulgated new stormwater regulations that require new development and re-development projects to implement stormwater retention practices that will effectively reduce the quantity of pollutants and sediment reaching the Bay.

"Looking back on thirty years, we have made remarkable progress," said Chesapeake Bay Commission Chairman Maggie McIntosh. "While our population in the watershed has doubled, we have managed to cut pollution entering the Bay by half. Our actions have been guided by science and supported by citizens. All of the agreements – 1983, 1987 and 2000 – have contained aspirational goals that have encouraged us to stretch our budgets, challenge our choices and accomplish unanticipated progress. It is fitting, as we enter our fourth decade, that Governor O'Malley will serve as the Chair of this multi-state partnership. He has pursued cutting-edge policies on waste treatment, stormwater, wind and agriculture, while embracing new technologies that promote certainty and efficiency. We are lucky to have him at the helm."

"Thirty years of dedicated partnership through the Chesapeake Bay Program has helped prevent environmental degradation and has built momentum toward restoration of one of our national treasures," said EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy. "EPA is committed to working alongside our state and federal partners and expanding outreach to local communities throughout the watershed. I'm looking forward to working with Governor O'Malley as Chesapeake Executive Council Chair to continue our great progress."

The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council members include the governors of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission's Chair and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Administrator. This assembly is responsible for setting the Chesapeake Bay Program's policy agenda. For more information, visit http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/chesapeake_executive_council.

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The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay for thirty years, since its creation in 1983. Partners include the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; the U.S. Department of Agriculture; the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; and advisory groups of citizens, scientists and local government officials. For more information, visit www.chesapeakebay.net.