



Chesapeake Bay Program
A Watershed Partnership

News Release

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Chesapeake Executive Council Elects New Chair, Announces Local Government Award Recipients and Discusses Progress toward Healthy Waters

Mason Neck, Va. –The [Chesapeake Executive Council \(EC\)](#) elected the District of Columbia’s Mayor, Vincent C. Gray, as their new Chair today, giving him the top leadership position within the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#), during their annual meeting held at [Gunston Hall](#), near Lorton, VA. Additionally, under their meeting’s theme, “Step by Step, Stream by Stream: Restoring Our Waters”, EC members discussed restoration progress since last year and considered how jurisdictions’ short-term milestones, established in 2009, will be used to track their goals for reducing pollution and creating healthy waters, as outlined in their recently-finalized Watershed Implementation Plans.

Outgoing EC Chair and EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson also announced 14 local governments from across the watershed that will be receiving technical assistance from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s (NFWF’s) Local Government Green Infrastructure Initiative. Jackson noted 23 additional localities have been awarded similar assistance through NFWF’s rolling grant process, for a total of 37 localities receiving support valued at \$2.3 million. The program, funded by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), offers local governments much-needed assistance to make progressive infrastructure changes to improve nearby water quality.

“The course we’re on keeps our long-term goals in focus while making certain that we take clear, tangible actions toward a cleaner Bay. The two-year milestones set in 2009 remain on track, and we have strong commitments -- and strong support from the Local Government Green Infrastructure Initiative -- for the next phase of this effort,” said former EC Chair Lisa Jackson. “It’s been my honor to chair the council, and I’m proud to support Mayor Gray as the work continues. Our local, state, and federal partners have put in tremendous efforts over the last year to finalize new plans for progress toward healthy waters. Now is the time to support the work that needs to happen at the local level, with everyone – including the millions of people who live in this region – taking part in protecting the waters that support our health, our environment and our economy.”

Council members and executives in attendance – including U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley, Chesapeake Bay Commission Chairman Senator Emmett Hanger, District of Columbia Mayor Vincent Gray, U.S. Department of Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and representatives from Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, West Virginia, and Delaware – heard from their three Bay Program Advisory Committees. The committees offered perspectives on issues in the areas of local government, citizen engagement and concern, and scientific and technical expertise. The EC then learned of innovative, successful partnerships and projects from Pennsylvania State University, the District Department of Environment, the Maryland Environmental Finance Center and the Virginia Association of Municipal Wastewater Agencies.

Chesapeake Bay Program partners have taken action to reduce pollution flowing to the Bay and its rivers for many years. With these final plans, the partners are making a key transition from planning for improvements under the Bay “pollution diet” to implementing more practices to improve the health of the Bay and its streams and rivers and enhance the quality of life for the more than 17 million people who live in the watershed.

“It is my great honor to accept the position of Chair to the Chesapeake Executive Council,” said Mayor Gray, “and to lead the Bay Program as we move into the next phase of protecting and restoring the great Chesapeake Bay and all the rivers and streams that feed it. The District has been a leader in recent years in urban greening and restoration projects, helping to restore our local waters to health. I look forward to deepening my involvement in the Bay-wide efforts and embracing the challenges and possibilities we face as we make progress toward a healthy Bay and a sustainable quality of life for all the residents in the region.”

The Executive Council establishes the policy agenda for the Chesapeake Bay Program and is represented by leaders from the U.S. EPA, USDA, Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Delaware, West Virginia, the District of Columbia, and the Chesapeake Bay Commission. Full 2012 meeting information and materials are available on http://www.chesapeakebay.net/about/ecmeeting/2012_executive_council_meeting. Gunston Hall is the historic home of the 18th century Virginia statesman, George Mason.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that has coordinated and conducted the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay since 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.

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