

Dear Friends,

In 1987, the Chesapeake Bay Program partners accepted a great challenge. They entered into a compact that committed the State of Maryland, Commonwealths of Virginia and Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the US EPA and the members of the Chesapeake Bay Commission to one of the most all encompassing environmental restorations ever undertaken. With comprehensive goals, dates and targets, the historic 1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement set a new world-wide standard for environmental action.

Now it is time for the Bay Program partners to acknowledge their past successes, reaffirm their leadership and recommit themselves to a healthy and productive Chesapeake Bay. In the year 2000, with the signing of a renewed Chesapeake Bay Agreement, the Bay Program will move the cleanup of the Chesapeake into a new age with new goals, new commitments and a new sense of purpose.

Last year, at the annual Executive Council meeting, I observed that the key to successfully restoring the Bay and its tributaries is the people who live in the Bay watershed. As we meet this year to craft language for the new 2000 Bay Agreement, I am proud to report that we have heard from citizens in every corner of the watershed. We have been given a clear and unambiguous message from the people who call the Bay region home: Be bold. Be decisive. Take action on the land, so that our waters run clean and clear. Make our streams and rivers healthy contributors to a healthy Bay. But, they also told us not to look back but meet the challenges of the future and manage the Chesapeake for the days of tomorrow.

Speaking for my Executive Council colleagues I want to assure all those who care about the Chesapeake Bay that we have listened to your concerns, we have understood the meaning of your words, and we have particular empathy for the depth of your feelings about the future of this most important of all natural resources. So, we ask you to join us in meeting the new challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and to embrace the renewed spirit of the new Bay Agreement by offering your advice and council. The draft Bay Agreement we will be releasing needs your approval. It needs your perspective. It needs the consensus of the people who will be challenged to meet its goals and achieve its commitments.

The new Agreement's drafting process has been specifically designed so that the people who live and work in the Bay watershed will have ample opportunity to tell us what they think. Do it. We need to hear from you, so that next June the Bay Program will continue to be the world's model for environmental action, and the people who live in the Bay watershed will continue to be regarded as the truest stewards of one of the world's greatest natural resources.

Sincerely,

Parris N. Glendening  
Governor