

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

Issue: **Environmental Justice/Environmental Diversity**

Updated April 10, 2014 (for PSC meeting discussion)

IRC recommendations for PSC are highlighted in yellow below.

The Program needs to address the difference between Environmental Justice and Environmental Diversity because the Partner/Stakeholder comments speak to both;

- Environmental Justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.
- Environmental Diversity focuses on the lack of involvement of ethnic minorities and the economically underprivileged in the environmental community with regards to career opportunities in environmental organizations.

Do we address both?

- If so, do we address them separately?
- If not, which topic to we address and why?

Current Language

The agreement currently does not mention environmental justice specifically, but it does include several points about diversity of those engaged, including:

Vision: “Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a **diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders.**”

Principles:

- “Represent the interests of people throughout the watershed fairly and effectively, including a broad **diversity of cultures, demographics and ages.**”
- “Engage our citizens to **increase the number and diversity of people who support and carry out the conservation and restoration activities** necessary to achieve the goals and outcomes of the Agreement.”

Options

1. Status quo
2. Add an Environmental Justice or Environmental Diversity outcome to a Stewardship Goal [pending approval]. **see attached language**
3. Address Diversity and Environmental Justice issues more explicitly in the Principles, or other appropriate sections, eg. Goal/Outcomes introduction.

Partner Comments

Citizens Advisory Committee (3/17/14)

We recommend that the draft Agreement’s Environmental Literacy and Public Access goals and outcomes be revised to combine and expand these sections under the title Citizen Engagement and Education: Establish an Environmental Justice coordinator within the EPA Bay Program and in each of the six Bay States and the District of Columbia. The coordinator would be responsible for conducting outreach to underserved communities to help address illegal dumping, abandoned housing, toxic pollution, safe public access for fishing and swimming, and other issues in the watershed’s built and urban environment which impact upon Chesapeake Bay and its rivers’ water quality and living resources. ...

Stakeholder Comments

HRSC

The statement addresses environmental and economic sustainability but does not address social sustainability. ... Although the term "diversity" is used in the Vision statement it does not necessarily mean that it is socially acceptable.

WE ACT, 5+ public individuals:

Goal: The Chesapeake Bay Agreement does an honorable job at laying the ground work for restoring the natural environment in the region. However, it is silent on the conditions of the built and urban environment. *Urban blight* is a physical and environmental condition often linked to environmental justice issues in urban communities like Baltimore, Philadelphia, Prince George's County, and Washington D.C. *It should not be left out of any regional environmental policy. More specifically, the Chesapeake Bay Agreement does not include actions to address illegal dumping, abandoned housing, food deserts, or toxic pollution. The absence of such language is poised to inadvertently help sustain such issues.*

Community Engagement Outcome: *Expand the Chesapeake Bay Programs' message beyond the conservation and protection of the natural environment to include the funding of more diverse program areas. Work with EPA Region 3 to increase appropriations to agencies, or programs that deal with environmental justice, toxics, and urban blight. In FY 2013-2014 there was no funding for these issues, including toxics; even though, a significant amount of comments on toxic chemicals were received. Increase outreach and funding for existing urban environmental programs, or to establish new programs that address urban food deserts, abandoned housing, illegal dumping, and community engagement with civic and community leaders. Fund and support these programs through grants with special attention given to minority owned businesses, non-profits, local jurisdictions serving urban communities as well as non-minority groups working on the above issues.*

Decision-making Body Outcome: *Expand efforts to recruit qualified minority owned non-profits and businesses, and local civic leaders for decision making agencies and boards. These partners should have a stake in environmental justice, food access, and eliminating toxic pollution in urban communities. Have a minimum 10% representation for these communities in agency staff and 20% representation on related boards. To be completed by 2020.*

We also hope that you and your team will engage members of our DMV Metro EJ Coalition and the University of Maryland School of Public Health in future discussions to help shape the implementation of the proposed elements of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement in a way that will address the concerns of low income, communities of color that are impacted by the Bay.

Environmental Justice and Environmental Health Disparities is a conversation and consideration that needs to be made at the forefront of any efforts – not an afterthought.

SOLS/LSR (similar to, but not exactly the same as above)

Goal - Environmental Justice: *While representation of diverse minority and low income communities appears to be growing in some portions of government, the decision making involved in environmental policy and pollution-source-siting decisions continues to lack substantive input from these communities. Significant voluntary improvements in these communities are difficult to realize when these populations are not engaged.*

Community Engagement Outcome: *Increase outreach and funding for education programs in under represented communities. Fund directly, or support through grants for non-profits, an engagement coordinator focused specifically on engaging and educating low-income and*

minority populations. Fund and engage at minimum one engagement coordinator per county by 2019.

Decision-making Body Representation Outcome: Expand efforts to recruit qualified minority and low-income community representatives for decision-making agencies and boards. Have at minimum a 10% representation of these communities in agency staff and a 20% representation on related boards. To be completed by 2020.

PennAg

We recognize the emerging interest in Environmental Justice. There is merit for this topic to be a component of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. Within Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Drainage Area, we have diverse topography and diverse communities. To ensure that all citizens within the Commonwealth's Bay Drainage Area have access to information on their role in improving water quality is needed.

Ann's Backyard Forest, Ltd.

Outreach to new audiences with principles of Bay management and protection should focus on introducing current environmental values to new audiences. Mature homeowners may not have had the opportunity to master the ecological principles the current generation of students now learns in elementary school. Certainly immigrants cannot be expected to have a strong level of Bay science awareness.

Public Individuals

- There needs to be a concerted effort to get adults and people from all races, economic status, and backgrounds working on the Bay restoration.
- This raises serious concerns about environmental justice. Are MDE/DNR/EPA really willing to let people living in poor, racially diverse neighborhoods live, swim, and fish along toxin-laden waterways like Curtis Creek, Bear Creek, and Back River, while at the same time going the extra mile to keep nutrients out of the rivers that are home to more affluent, predominantly white communities?
- Specific outcomes should be provided that use the language of environmental justice to ensure diverse participation from chronically underrepresented minority and low socio-economic groups. Another group that is absent from this draft is that of future generations. The inclusion of 'sustainable' implies a future oriented vision. An individual should be appointed on each Chesapeake Bay Program workgroup or committee to advocate for future generations and prevent shortsighted decisions or intragenerational discounting in cost-benefit analysis.

DRAFT Language:

2. **Diversity Outcome [Stewardship Goal]:** Identify minority stakeholder groups who are not currently represented in the leadership, decision making and implementation of the current conservation and restoration activities and create meaningful opportunities and programs to recruit and engage them in the partnership.