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August 21, 2019

Governor Hogan, Chair  
Chesapeake Executive Council  
Office of the Governor  
100 State Circle  
Annapolis, MD 21401

Re: LGAC 2019 Annual Report and Recommendations

As the Chair of the Local Government Advisory Committee, I am here representing the collective voice of local elected officials throughout the Chesapeake watershed. We support the vision of healthy local watersheds that has the added benefit of improving the health of the Chesapeake Watershed.

I am pleased to present the attached 2019 Annual Report of recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council. Through this report we seek to not only raise issues which we believe hinder local governments' ability to implement watershed protection and restoration efforts, but more importantly to share our thoughts on how these issues might be addressed. The recommendations provided herein were carefully crafted with full consideration given to the resource limitations we all face.

Last year LGAC recommended exploring workforce development programs to train and provide jobs installing and maintaining green infrastructure. I am happy to share that LGAC followed up during its November 2018 LGAC meeting to learn more about workforce development and next week, on September 11<sup>th</sup>, LGAC will be hosting a day-long, invitation-only, local government forum where we will develop recommendations for programs to replicate and expand upon as well as identify a pipeline of job placement with the goal of meaningful employment, a living wage and marketable trade skills.

Finally, LGAC hopes to fill its final open position for a New York representative.

Sincerely,

Ann Simonetti, LGAC Chair

Cc: Chesapeake Executive Council  
Dana Aunkst, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program



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## Annual Report to the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council September 2019

Each year LGAC explores issues affecting local governments' ability to participate more fully in realizing the Vision contained in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. What we learned over the last year is that local governments are concerned about flooding, infrastructure maintenance, regulatory compliance, climate resiliency, healthy streams and watersheds, and a variety of other issues that affect the local economy and the health, safety and welfare of constituents, as well as the health of the Bay. Without additional state and federal support, however, we will continue to fall short of our collective vision for an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Therefore, we recommend the Executive Council take the following actions to advance Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts at the local level.

### **1. Consider Dual Benefits when Engaging on Local Flooding Concerns**

Home, business and community damage due to floods has increased during the last decade and further increases are expected due to climate change impacts from sea level rise, stream and creek flooding, and storm surge. Climate resilience and flood mitigation go hand-in-hand with disaster preparedness. Within the Chesapeake Bay region, LGAC would like to ensure that flood mitigation efforts and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts work in conjunction with one another. There are also opportunities to combine efforts, such as berms that incorporate living shorelines to provide flood protection, habitat improvement, and pollution reduction.

LGAC recommends the Executive Council support a one-day summit of flood, climate and disaster experts including but not limited to representatives from FEMA, Army Corps of Engineers, PSC, LGAC, USGS and state associations like Maryland Commission on Climate Change, Maryland Climate Leadership Academy, MEMA, and the Virginia and Maryland Association of Counties and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. In addition, we would like to suggest the inclusion of land use planning and utility representatives to round out the discussion.

The goal of the Summit is to consider options for infrastructure investments for new buildings and roads, and retrofit of existing structures which would increase the ability of the Watershed to prioritize, plan for and respond to the increasing cost, damage and impacts associated with climate impacts while considering the impacts to Chesapeake Bay restoration measures.

### **2. Include a Representative from the Federal Emergency Management Agency on Management Board**

The Chesapeake Bay region is seeing increasing extreme weather and its related detrimental impacts. FEMA's mission is to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disasters. Frequently



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the decisions FEMA is making have conflicting accountability with local governments who are developing flood mitigation efforts. Including a FEMA representative on the Management Board will aid to improve communication and coordination between local officials, emergency managers and first responders.

### **3. Align Strategies at all Government Levels to Share Resources and Improve Communication**

Local governments and counties tend to develop their budgets independent of one another despite having shared built/natural resources. For example, towns in a watershed may, to varying degrees, or may not allocate money to protect water resources. This could lead to uneven resource protection and difficulties implementing watershed management/protection plans. Under the proposed Phase III WIPs, each community is expected to achieve reductions in their stormwater runoff targets. However, each municipality, much less each County, budgets for water quality protection in a different way. Some don't at all. If counties are now expected to meet reduction targets related to the developed sector, then it is critical that they begin budgeting to achieve those reductions prior to 2025. Federal, state and local governments should align their interests, prioritize efforts, and invest funds strategically and collaboratively. LGAC encourages the EC to develop technical assistance to begin those shared service/budgeting discussions.

### **4. Increase Opportunities for LGAC/PSC/Governor Interaction**

LGAC welcomes increased opportunities to share local priorities with Governors and their Senior Staff. LGAC Members have tried to meet at least annually with their Governor/Mayor and request this become semi-annually.

As your advisors on issues related to local government engagement, we stand ready to assist in achieving our collective vision for a clean and healthy Chesapeake Bay Watershed through the implementation of these recommendations.

