



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
A Watershed Partnership

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# Press Release

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## **Chesapeake Bay Leaders Adopt New Measures to Reduce Pollution, Improve Habitat and Expand Watershed Restoration Funding**

*Executive Council moves forward on several Blue Ribbon Finance Panel Recommendations*

**Mount Vernon, Va. (January 10, 2005)** – Chesapeake Bay region government leaders today set the stage for the development of an innovative regional financing strategy for the multi-billion dollar restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. The Council also adopted new measures that will improve migratory fish habitat, restore native oyster populations, and reduce nutrient pollution from agriculture.

Gathered on the grounds of George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate, the Chesapeake Executive Council called for a panel of finance and legal experts to develop specifics supporting a regional financing authority charged with distributing and prioritizing Bay restoration funds across the six-state Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The regional financing authority is the primary recommendation of the independent Chesapeake Bay Watershed Blue Ribbon Finance Panel chaired by former Virginia Governor Gerald L. Baliles. The panel delivered its recommendations to the Executive Council in October.

"For two decades Bay states and the federal government have worked together to coordinate on-the-ground restoration programs throughout the Bay watershed. Today, we are taking the first strides toward jointly prioritizing the financing of these efforts at the watershed level," said Chesapeake Executive Council Chair and Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner. "The Bay's crabs and rockfish know no political boundaries, and neither should our restoration efforts."

The Executive Council – comprised of Virginia Governor Mark R. Warner, Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael O. Leavitt, District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams, and Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair Senator J. Lowell Stoltzfus – meets annually to lead restoration efforts throughout the 64,000-square miles of land that drain into the Bay.

Specifically, the Executive Council requested that by July 1, 2005, policymakers provide it with a proposal outlining the governance structure for the authority, including examples of decision-making and funding mechanisms and a determination of necessary legislative and regulatory changes to create the authority.

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The Executive Council also moved forward on several other Blue Ribbon Panel recommendations designed to accelerate Bay restoration efforts. Measures aim to increase involvement of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Bay restoration efforts, explore additional funding opportunities in the 2007 Farm Bill, establish a Watershed Funding Network and better manage and prevent urban stormwater runoff.

In a complementary action, Chesapeake Bay Commission Chairman Stoltzfus also shared with the Council its report outlining the most cost effective commonly-used nutrient and sediment reduction strategies. With Bay restoration funds tight, the report can be used as an important tool to help target expenditure of taxpayer dollars.

In addition to financing initiatives, the council also adopted measures to reduce nutrient pollution from animal manure and improve populations of two of the Bay's key species – American shad and the native Eastern oyster.

With animal manure and poultry litter accounting for a significant amount of the nonpoint nutrient pollution flowing into the Bay, the Executive Council took action to minimize manure nutrients reaching local waters. The directive commits Bay Program partners to developing innovative ways to reduce the nutrient content of animal diets and fostering new markets for animal manure for use in fertilizer and power generation.

The council also committed to a new, expanded goal of completing at least 100 new fish passage projects to open an additional 1,000 miles of high quality rivers over the next 10 years. Fish passage restoration efforts provide migratory fish such as American shad the opportunity to return to native spawning areas. When supplemented by restocking efforts, Bay Program partners hope to return populations to historic levels.

In 2004, Bay Program partners opened an additional 352 river miles to migratory fish, bringing the total number of reopened miles to 1,570, surpassing the 1,357 mile restoration goal set in 1993.

The council also adopted the *2004 Chesapeake Bay Oyster Management Plan* as a continuing effort to fulfill native oyster restoration goals set in the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement. The plan commits Bay Program partners to work together to implement management actions to address: disease, oyster sanctuaries, harvest, hatchery and aquaculture considerations, and monitoring and data management.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is home to more than 16 million people living in parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. Since 1983, the Chesapeake Bay Program has coordinated the restoration of the Bay and its watershed.

For copies of Executive Council Directives and additional information on today's actions, visit our on-line press center at <http://www.chesapeakebay.net/press.htm>.

**Additional Remarks by Chesapeake Executive Council Members and Headwaters Partners  
January 10, 2005**

**Incoming Chesapeake Executive Council Chair and Pennsylvania Governor Edward G. Rendell**

"It truly is an honor to become Pennsylvania's first chief executive to be named EC chairman. This position enables our state to highlight some of the innovative work we've done to clean up waterways and improve the health of communities in the Susquehanna River Watershed while advancing new approaches to ensure all of the Bay partners meet and exceed nutrient reduction goals.

"Pennsylvania has achieved substantial nutrient reductions over the years and continues to put in place aggressive measures to help us meet new water quality goals. We are working directly with the agricultural community to improve management practices for animal waste and expand efforts to restore riparian forest buffers --- all while establishing new nutrient limits on point sources to decrease significantly the amount of pollution our Commonwealth contributed to the Bay. Despite all of the progress we've made, a great deal more work remains to be done. Pennsylvania and its partners in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed remain committed to finding new and better ways to protect and preserve this priceless natural resource."

**Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr.**

"It is clear that the Executive Council partners are passionate and committed to restoring the Chesapeake Bay. The directives issued today, particularly those focusing on new funding for our ongoing restoration efforts, are critical steps in moving Bay restoration efforts beyond its current limitations.

"Additionally, they will complement the actions my administration has already taken with the establishment of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund last year. With \$1 billion in revenues generated through the fund, Maryland will upgrade all of its major wastewater treatment plants to near limits of enhanced nutrient removal (ENR) technology, eliminating 7.5 million lbs of nitrogen in the Bay each year. Two plants, Easton on the Eastern Shore and the Celanese plant in Western Maryland are already under construction and seven more are under design for ENR. As we move forward, I applaud Virginia's step to match our commitment in this regard, and encourage other states to follow this lead."

**District of Columbia Mayor Anthony A. Williams**

"The District of Columbia remains committed to working with its partners to restore the Chesapeake Bay. It is a long process, and the challenges are great. For the District of Columbia, those challenges begin at home.

"As Mayor, I have made restoring the Anacostia River and its waterfront a top priority. I am pleased that the city, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and non-government environmental organizations are now in agreement on how to address our combined sewer overflow problems, and we are moving forward on an accelerated schedule. Unfortunately, the cost of cleaner water is great, but clean water is critical to both a healthy environment and healthy citizens. I look forward to working with our partners to aggressively seek federal funding options for the Bay clean-up."

**Chesapeake Bay Commission Chair Senator J. Lowell Stoltzfus**

“Bay restoration is critical. Scientists tell us we must greatly reduce nutrient and sediment loads if significant water quality improvements are to occur. How can we fund these endeavors? The Commission has spent the past year identifying the most cost effective approaches to achieve the greatest reduction. There is a clear willingness on the part of the public to invest in the health of the Bay if we are spending the money wisely. Maryland's wastewater surcharge demonstrates citizens willingness to pay. We must continue to harness the best ideas at the local, state, and federal level to get the job done.”

**U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Deputy Administrator Stephen L. Johnson**

“The Chesapeake Bay is a National Treasure and we are dedicated to its protection and restoration. We have made real and important progress over the past twenty years, and have taken needed steps to continue that progress. Currently over 100 wastewater treatment plants throughout the watershed have introduced nutrient removing technology, and under actions announced last week we will raise the number of treatment plants using this technology to 350. Three million acres of cropland are operating under nutrient management plans, and thousands of miles of forest buffers have been planted to help reduce the amount of sediments and nutrients entering the Bay. These are only some of the steps that have been taken, and we recognize that much work lies ahead of us. The Federal Government will continue to provide funds, personnel and expertise to the effort. We will continue to collaborate with stakeholders throughout the watershed. This broad partnership is our strength, and the reason I continue to be optimistic that we will be successful in restoring the Bay.”

**West Virginia Secretary of the Department of Environmental Protection Stephanie R. Timmermeyer**

“Over the past year, the state of West Virginia has partnered with local stakeholders in developing a tributary strategy that will benefit not only our state, but our downstream neighbors. Education is the key to helping citizens understand the merits of nutrient reduction for West Virginia and the Bay. West Virginia is committed to doing its part in implementing water quality improvement strategies and promoting a healthy environment.”

**Delaware Secretary of the Dept. of Natural Resources and Environmental Control John A. Hughes**

“Delaware is actively doing its part to clean up the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries and Governor Ruth Ann Minner has challenged state environmental and agricultural officials to continue to pursue more opportunities to improve water quality and meet water quality standards.

“We've made considerable progress. Delaware is the first state in the entire Bay drainage area to adopt the new, more stringent water quality standards that were recommended by our Bay Program partners. A nutrient TMDL for the Nanticoke River watershed has yielded significant point source reductions. Laurel and Bridgeville are investing over \$11.7 million dollars of state loans and grants to significantly reduce nitrogen and phosphorus levels in their discharges. And Delaware's Nutrient Management Commission designated the Nanticoke River watershed as a “Critical Area,” which allows the Commission to focus cost-share and manure relocation program funds on water quality improvement projects in this watershed. Our progress will continue as Secretary of Agriculture Mike Scuse and I work together on further strategies in this important initiative.”