



Chesapeake Bay Program
A Watershed Partnership

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

ADOPTION STATEMENT

SUBMERGED AQUATIC VEGETATION

In support of our continuing pursuit of our shared vision of a Chesapeake Bay system with abundant, diverse populations of living resources, we reaffirm our commitment to protect and restore underwater bay grasses, also known as submerged aquatic vegetation or SAV, in the Chesapeake Bay and the tidal waters of its tributaries.

We recognize the critical role that SAV plays in providing essential habitat for crabs, fish, and other living resources. We also recognize that SAV improves the quality of surrounding aquatic living resources habitats by absorbing nutrients, producing oxygen, trapping suspended sediment, and mitigating the erosive effects of waves and rising sea level on the bay's shoreline.

Due to greatly reduced water clarity throughout the Chesapeake Bay, total acreage of bay grasses remains far below historic coverage. While there have been recent improvements in abundance, the *Chesapeake 2000* agreement recognized the need to accelerate the restoration of this vital resource. Without diverse, healthy beds of SAV, the bay could never be considered restored and healthy.

By adopting this "Strategy to Accelerate the Protection and Restoration of Submerged Aquatic Vegetation in the Chesapeake Bay," we commit to achieve 185,000 acres of SAV bay-wide by 2010. We recognize that the most essential action in this strategy is meeting water clarity criteria in areas designated for SAV use.

The new strategy identifies the following four major and necessary actions:

1. Meet jurisdictional water clarity criteria in areas designated for SAV use.
2. Provide existing SAV beds greater protection from anthropogenic activities and invasive species.
3. Accelerate SAV restoration by planting 1,000 acres of new SAV beds by December 2008.
4. Enhance SAV research, citizen involvement and education.

By these actions, we will pursue our commitment made in *Chesapeake 2000* to restore and protect the ecological integrity, productivity and beneficial uses of the Chesapeake Bay.

December 9, 2003

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND



FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION


