



# Audubon MARYLAND-DC

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Via e-mail to [agreement@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:agreement@chesapeakebay.net)

Mr. Nicholas DiPasquale  
Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board  
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109  
Annapolis, MD 21403

Dear Mr. DiPasquale and Management Board Members:

Please accept the the following comments on the draft Chesapeake Bay Agreement, respectfully submitted by Audubon Maryland-DC, the Maryland state office of the National Audubon Society. The mission of Audubon Maryland-DC is to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on birds, other wildlife and their habitats, for the benefit of humanity and the earth's biological diversity. Audubon Maryland-DC represents more than 11,000 members in the region.

Audubon Maryland-DC has signed on to comments drafted by the Choose Clean Water Coalition, of which we are a member organization, and we here wish to add some additional comments pertaining to the issue of climate change.

Climate change is one of the greatest environmental challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and its effects are already being experienced in the Chesapeake Bay in the form of sea level rise, loss of tidal marshes and increasing storm surge intensity, to name just a few climate change impacts. However, the draft Agreement fails to acknowledge or address climate change, and merely gives scant mention of some of its impacts. It is important that a forward-looking Agreement, such as this, tackles climate change directly as a serious issue. Climate change and its impacts should be included in the Preamble, Principles, Vital Habitats and Land Conservation sections of the draft Agreement, as follows:

In the Preamble, fourth paragraph, the ending of the first sentence, should be changed from “changing environmental conditions” to “climate change”.

In the Principles section, the eighth principle in the list should be changed from “Anticipates changing conditions.....” to “Addresses ongoing climate impacts and anticipates changing conditions caused by climate change, including sea level rise, temperature, precipitation and storm surge.

The need to adapt to climate change should be included throughout the Vital Habits section. The introductory paragraph should be amended to the following (underlined text is the proposed to be inserted).

## Vital Habitats

Pressures from increasing needs for land and resources have resulted in fragmentation and degradation of many habitats across the watershed while also challenging the health of many Bay watershed species. The Bay's tidal wetlands are threatened with widespread inundation by sea level rise, which is accelerating due to climate change. Conserving healthy habitats, restoring the function of degraded habitats, and increasing the resilience of coastal habitats in the face of sea level rise, is essential to the long-term resilience and sustainability of the ecosystem and the region's quality of life.

**Goal:** Restore, enhance, and protect a network of land and water habitats, in the face of climate change and other threats, to support high-priority species and to afford other public benefits, including water quality, recreational uses and scenic value across the watershed.

**Wetlands Outcome:** Create or re-establish 85,000 acres of tidal and non-tidal wetlands and enhance function and resilience to sea level rise of an additional 150,000 acres of degraded wetlands by 2025. These activities may occur in any land use (including urban) but primarily occur in agricultural or natural landscapes. In tidal marshes activities should focus on increasing resilience to sea level rise.

**Black Duck:** By 2025, restore wetland habitats and increase resilience to sea level rise, to support a wintering population of 100,000 black duck, a species representative of the health of tidal marshes across the watershed.

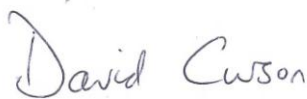
Further, we urge that the final Agreement should include explicit and concrete goals relating to climate adaptation. A climate adaptation goal might read as follows:

### **Climate Adaptation**

**Goal:** Expand the implementation of climate adaptation practices to ensure that rivers, tidal marshes, and the Chesapeake Bay continue to maintain biological functioning as environmental conditions change.

We are happy to discuss our concerns and help your partnership develop a strong and effective new Agreement in any way that we can. Please contact David Curson at [dcurson@audubon.org](mailto:dcurson@audubon.org).

Respectfully submitted,



David Curson,  
**Director of Bird Conservation,  
Audubon Maryland-DC**