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Vincent C. Gray, Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council
District of Columbia
Office of the Mayor
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Suite 316
Washington, DC 20004

Dear Honorable Members of the Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council:

The Local Government Advisory Committee is pleased to present our comments on the draft Bay Agreement. It is our hope that the perspective we bring to the table will help inform you about the unique challenges faced by local governments as well as identify opportunities to better engage, empower and facilitate local government as non-signatory partners in your protection and restoration efforts.

As the third tier of the federal, state, local government hierarchy, local governments are natural partners in the protection and restoration of the Bay. Local governments have invested millions of dollars in protection and restoration efforts since the first Bay Agreement was signed thirty years ago. We will continue to do so, in large part because these investments are good for our citizens and our communities. Investments in protection and restoration ensure that our residents have clean water to drink as well as streams, rivers and lakes in which to swim, fish and play. Investments in green infrastructure help provide habitat for wildlife and insects while cooling and beautifying our communities. And these investments help protect our communities from flooding. The investments being made in the upgrade of wastewater treatment plants are not only ensuring that discharge limits are met but are also addressing long-neglected maintenance and capital upgrades and expansions needed to meet an ever growing population.

Clearly not all local governments have chosen to invest their limited resources in cleaning up the Bay. And therein lies our challenge. We must do more to engage, empower and facilitate local governments as partners in clean water and watershed protection. We must help them see that it's not just about the Bay – it's about clean water everywhere for everyone!

The LGAC formed a Bay Agreement workgroup to assist the Bay Program partners in drafting a new Bay Agreement. Over the last several months our members have reviewed and commented on various drafts. Dave Dunmyer, Queen Anne's County Commissioner and LGAC member, has participated in numerous Goal Implementation Team, Management Board and Principals Staff Committee discussions about the Agreement.

Following the first round of public comments, LGAC convened a group of stakeholders to assist in developing a goal and outcomes that addressed the expressed desire for increased local government leadership. In response to feedback received from members of the Principals Staff Committee, LGAC



Mary S. Gattis, LGAC Coordinator
3310 Market Street, Suite A | Camp Hill, PA 17011 | 717-475-8390 | mgattis@allianceforthebay.org



then developed an alternative approach to engaging, empowering and facilitating local governments through the Bay Agreement. LGAC fully supports the current language which acknowledges the vital role of local governments in achieving the goals of the Agreement and establishes a procedure for engaging local governments through Management Strategies.

While we believe that the current draft Agreement does a good job of reflecting local government issues, we want to highlight three outstanding issues which relate to effective engagement of local governments in the Bay protection and restoration effort:

1. **Funding for watershed protection and restoration is inadequate.** Resources, including additional funding and technical assistance, must be channeled to local governments who commit to assist in achieving the goals of this Agreement. This doesn't always mean increasing budgets but rather ensuring that funds are being distributed in a way that maximizes investments in clean water. For example, transportation or Community Development Block Grant monies may be awarded in such a way that a project that meets multiple goals, including water quality improvement, is prioritized over those that do not address water quality. LGAC has begun drilling down into the funding issue so that we can better advise you on such opportunities.

Municipal governments throughout the watershed are looking for solutions to the financing problem. In some places, stormwater fees have been put in place.

2. **Communication with local governments must improve.** Engaging, empowering and facilitating local governments in achieving the goals of the new Bay Agreement will necessitate a much more proactive communications strategy. The opportunities for local government involvement in developing and implementing Management Strategies must be broadly communicated. With regard to the Water Quality Goal, effectively communicating about expectations and consequences should be a priority. LGAC recently began hosting roundtables at state municipal association conferences in an effort to increase engagement of local government leaders. We believe such efforts which focus on peer to peer communications will go far in increasing the number of elected officials who support watershed protection and restoration efforts. We welcome the opportunity to coordinate such efforts with your staff.

Sharing local success stories and lessons learned will improve efficiency and avoid "reinventing the wheel." An effective means for disseminating this information must be developed in order to avoid information overload.

3. **Headwaters states should be represented on Advisory Committees.** We presume that this issue will be addressed in the Governance Document. We believe it is important to raise the issue at this time however, due to the potential budget implications associated with an expanded membership.

We thank you for the trust you put in us to serve as your advisors and hope that you find our comments helpful. We look forward to continuing to assist you and your staff in drafting a Bay Agreement of which we can all be proud.

Sincerely,



J. Richard Gray
Mayor, City of Lancaster Pennsylvania
Chair, Local Government Advisory Committee