



# MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

## AMONG

The State of Delaware, the District of Columbia, the State of Maryland, the State of New York, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the Commonwealth of Virginia, the State of West Virginia, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, the Susquehanna River Basin Commission, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, the United States Environmental Protection Agency, and the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

## REGARDING

Using Citizen and Non-traditional Partner Monitoring Data to Assess Water Quality and Living Resource Status and Our Progress Toward Restoration of a Healthy Chesapeake Bay and Watershed

WHEREAS, the health of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed depends on individual and community-based stewardship by the more than 18 million people who call this watershed home;

WHEREAS, the Clean Water Act states that all existing and readily available information must be evaluated for assessment of our nations waterways and the Chesapeake Bay Program is a leader in leveraging resources through a partnership approach;

WHEREAS, individuals, watershed groups, schools, local governments, and other organizations volunteer their time and talents by participating in environmental monitoring programs; and this *citizen science* represents a unique opportunity for advancing our knowledge while supporting education and community service and fostering stewardship throughout the Chesapeake Bay community;

WHEREAS, the cost of monitoring and assessment of tidal and non-tidal waters as well as other ecosystems in the Chesapeake Bay watershed exceeds the capabilities of individual partners and surpasses current funding within the jurisdictions, it is essential that all data sources of known quality be integrated into our monitoring networks;

WHEREAS, data resulting from volunteer and nontraditional partner monitoring, and citizen science efforts can inform impact assessments of local conservation actions as well as decisions that support targeting of management practices that will restore and sustain the health of habitats, living resources and communities across the Bay watershed;

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative (CMC) has created a framework to facilitate the collection and integration of volunteer and nontraditional partner monitoring efforts into the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program that represents a unique

collaboration and network of monitoring groups across all six states and the District of Columbia;

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the undersigned representatives of the District, state, interstate, and federal entities with responsibility for monitoring the waters and resources of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed agree that we will:

- Work cooperatively with the CMC and the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership to support and sustain a network of citizen science and non-traditional monitoring partners.
- Endorse an open-access clearinghouse of quality-assured environmental data generated by citizen scientists and nontraditional partners, organized under a 3-tier classification of uses, and integrate this data into monitoring networks for educational (Tier 1), management targeting (Tier 2) and regulatory assessment (Tier 3) applications as authorized by applicable statutes, regulations and guidance.
- Promote the collection of water quality, benthic macroinvertebrate data, [as well as] other monitoring data including, but not limited to physical and chemical habitat, biological, weather and climate data, by citizen scientists and non-traditional partners such as local and regional organizations, agencies, and/or educational institutions that can inform the Chesapeake Bay Program to adaptively manage and track progress toward meeting the goals and outcomes of the Watershed Agreement.
- Develop and adopt methods for data integration into regional monitoring and assessment strategies.
- Collaborate with the CMC in training a diverse, equitable and inclusive volunteer and non-traditional partner base for monitoring efforts.

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- Support and actively contribute to the review and implementation of standard protocols and quality assurance programs to produce data of known and

documented quality across all seven watershed jurisdictions.

FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND



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FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



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FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



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FOR THE STATE OF DELAWARE



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FOR THE STATE OF NEW YORK



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FOR THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA



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FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



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FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION



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FOR THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL  
PROTECTION AGENCY



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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

United States Geological Survey

United States Forest Service

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

United States Department of Agriculture

National Park Service

FOR THE INTERSTATE COMMISSION ON  
THE POTOMAC RIVER BASIN

FOR THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER  
BASIN COMMISSION

FOR THE METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON  
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

FOR THE CHESAPEAKE MONITORING COOPERATIVE