September 29, 2017

The Honorable Larry Hogan
Chairman Chesapeake Executive Council
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401-1925

Dear Governor Hogan,

Perhaps like you, the members of the Citizens’ Advisory Committee (CAC), depend upon the clear communication style and format of the Bay Journal. This is the only publication of its kind in our region, exploring key and emerging issues that impact the collaborative restoration the Chesapeake Bay in a very accessible, easy to understand manner. Citizens and professionals around the Chesapeake Bay watershed rely on the Bay Journal to stay informed.

CAC encourages you, as the Chair of the Chesapeake Executive Council, to garner the support of the Bay States and DC in a request to the U.S. EPA to reinstate the federal support for the Bay Journal publication. We recently learned that after 25 years, the EPA decided a “shift of priorities” warrants the termination of a six-year grant after less than two years into the competitively awarded cooperative agreement. The federal support for the Bay Journal accounts for 40% of their budget and allows the Bay Journal Media nonprofit organization to leverage funding from other sources.

As the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement states, “The long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort will depend on local leadership and local action that depends primarily on a strong citizen stewardship.” The Bay Journal is a critical component to the Chesapeake Bay Partnership’s communications and outreach to communities, schools, watershed organizations, and government agencies. It provides nearly 100,000 monthly readers (including on-line) with unbiased information on a broad range of issues as well as educates people about heritage and outdoor experiences in our region.

Each month, more than 4,000 copies are distributed to schools for classroom use and 6,000 copies are sent to libraries, nature centers, and other locations. There is no other source in our watershed for comprehensive and objective information on the progress of restoration in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The stories, science, and successes reported in the Bay Journal not only inform, but also inspire.
As the Agreement notes, strong citizen stewardship is key to our success and the Bay Journal is an important and powerful tool in building that stewardship. The federal government has a role in supporting the citizens in their desire to learn and act on behalf of their local streams and rivers, as the health and vitality of people and communities is inseparable from the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

We respectfully request that you lead an effort on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay Partnership to protect the Bay Journal and ensure that citizens will continue to benefit from this inarguably valuable resource. We thank you for all that you do on behalf of this incredibly important restoration effort.

Sincerely,

Paula Jasinski

Chair, Citizens’ Advisory Committee

cc: Muriel Bower, Mayor of District of Columbia
    John Carney, Governor of Delaware
    Andrew Cuomo, Governor of New York
    Garth Everett, Chesapeake Bay Commission
    Jim Justice, Governor of West Virginia
    Terry McAuliffe, Governor of Virginia
    Tom Wolfe, Governor of Pennsylvania
    Ben Grumbles, Maryland Secretary of the Environment
    Nick DiPasquale, Director, USEPA Chesapeake Bay Program