



Citizens Advisory Committee

TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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January 13, 2021

President-Elect Joseph R. Biden
Post Office Box 438
Wilmington, DE 19899

Dear Mr. President-Elect,

The Citizens Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council extends our warmest congratulations on your election as the 46th President of the United States. We are thrilled that you were born and raised in two of the states that make up the Chesapeake Bay watershed (Pennsylvania and Delaware). Our organization is a non-partisan volunteer group appointed by our respective Governors of VA, MD and PA, the Mayor of DC and the Board of Directors of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. We represent a diverse group of stakeholders who advise the leadership of the Chesapeake Bay Program on progress and policies that impact residents who live and work in the watershed.

As you and your team prepare to address the multitude of challenges facing our nation, we urge you to keep the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's commitment to restoring the Bay watershed as a high priority of your Administration. The Federal government, acting through the EPA and 21 other Federal agencies, has played a vital role in the Chesapeake restoration effort from its very beginning more than 40 years ago. A renewed Federal commitment and coordinated Federal effort will be absolutely essential for meeting the pollution reduction, conservation and restoration goals by the year 2025 specified in the most recent multi-state and Federal accord, the *2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement*, signed under the Obama Administration. In this regard, we respectfully request your Administration's attention to the following three key areas:

- 1) **Federal Leadership**: We urge you to direct that the Chesapeake Bay Federal Leadership Committee, established under the Obama Administration Executive Order 13508, be reconvened on a regular basis to ensure that the various programs and activities of Federal agencies participating in the restoration of the Chesapeake ecosystem remain on target to achieve the year 2025 restoration goals. Other Federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Labor and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), should be encouraged to participate actively on the Federal Leadership Committee



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to ensure that environmental education, green job opportunities and the critical environmental issues relating to the Conowingo Dam relicensing respectively, are fully integrated into the Federal response. We recommend reinstating the position of Special Assistant to the EPA Administrator on the Chesapeake Bay and Anacostia River that was created under President Obama and terminated by the Trump Administration.

Likewise, as agricultural runoff remains the single largest source of pollution to the Chesapeake watershed, we request that your Secretary of Agriculture designee, Tom Vilsack, meet with the Chesapeake Executive Council soon after he is confirmed to explore opportunities and options to optimize the use of existing agricultural conservation programs to address our needs in the Chesapeake watershed. In this regard, we note that environmentally sustainable agricultural practices and agricultural forest buffer programs provide greenhouse gas reduction benefits while also supporting herd health, soil health, and mitigation of polluted agricultural runoff.

- 2) **Federal Funding:** Federal funding for national programs such as the Clean Water Act's State Revolving Fund, as well as EPA, Army Corps of Engineers, NOAA and National Park Service programs, among others specifically authorized for the Chesapeake, are vital to achieving our restoration goals. President Trump's budget requests over the past four years would have slashed these programs -- substantially setting back our restoration work -- had it not been for the efforts of our regional Congressional Delegation. We encourage you to ensure the highest possible levels of funding for all these programs and to make major investments in clean water infrastructure in any initiative to rebuild America's infrastructure.
- 3) **Federal Oversight, Enforcement and Accountability:** In addition to reversing the past four years of rollbacks in environmental regulations that protect the health of the people and the environment, the EPA, the FERC and other Federal regulatory and enforcement agencies must be adequately staffed and directed to utilize the full range of tools: inspections; monitoring; evaluations; equity assessments; and vigorous enforcement of existing laws to ensure a cleaner, healthier future for the Chesapeake watershed and equitable access to clean water and air for all residents in our region and across our nation.

Your attention to these matters is greatly appreciated and we look forward to working with your Administration to complete the job of restoring the Chesapeake Bay – a national treasure – and the rivers that feed it, to a healthy productive and sustainable estuary. Congratulations again on your election as President.

Sincerely,



Julie Patton Lawson
Chair, Citizens Advisory Committee

cc: Chesapeake Executive Council
Chesapeake Bay Program's Principals' Staff Committee
Dana Aunkst, Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program
Bill Jenkins, Acting Deputy Director, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program



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