

Chesapeake Bay Program DEIJ Statement

Comments/Edits from other PSC members on May 15, 2020 Draft

CBP Vision from the 2014 Watershed Agreement

Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage, and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders.

Our Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Just as natural ecosystems depend on biodiversity to thrive, the long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort depends on the equitable, just and inclusive engagement of all communities living throughout the watershed. This encompasses all dimensions of diversity, including race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, national origin, citizenship, religion, political affiliation, age, physical abilities, veteran-status, gender, sexual identity or other factors.

The impacts of discrimination and continuing environmental, economic and health disparities disproportionately burden underserved communities, including those of color, low-income status and indigenous populations. This limits access to clean water and air, fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation, and results in inequitable impacts on the human health and the surrounding environment of these communities. Cultural, racial and social disparities are only exacerbated by such environmental factors as climate change and pollution, and public health emergencies, such as the COVID -19 pandemic, demonstrating the need for the Chesapeake Bay Program to explicitly and tangibly commit to diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice.

At the Chesapeake Bay Program, we believe the full diversity of people who live, work and recreate in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have a right to benefit from, and help guide, the future of an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water and air, abundant fish and wildlife, conserved lands, access to the water and a vibrant cultural heritage.

We are committed to embracing diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in all areas of the Chesapeake Bay Program to achieve our mission **and recognize the importance of addressing racism in our restoration efforts, structures and acts of daily practice**. Specifically, we commit to:

- Intentionally incorporate accountability measures for diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in our organizational structure, leadership, policies, strategic goals, workplans and program delivery, as well as grantmaking and funding decisions, restoration and conservation activities.
- Engage, recruit and retain leadership, staff, appointees, interns and volunteers that reflect the diversity of people living within the Chesapeake Bay region.
- Foster a culture of inclusion, respect and mutual learning within the Chesapeake Bay Program by leading organizational change and empowering new voices and perspectives in our outreach, engagement and internal decision-making.
- Develop long-term relationships, partnerships and increased collaborative planning with organizations led by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented populations that result in co-benefits and mutually beneficial decisions and outcomes.
- Ensure the benefits of our science, restoration and partnership programs are distributed in a fair and equitable manner without adverse, disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations,

Commented [PT1]: This suggested edit came from Ann Swanson (Executive Director, Chesapeake Bay Commission) on behalf of Chairman Yaw. Ann added: *The exact words are not as important as the use of the term "racism" itself. Given the times, [we should] address this directly, either through the text of the document or in the speeches that accompany its signing.*

Commented [PT2]: Comment from Patrick McDonnell (Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection): *General commentary is probably more vital right now. The existing documents were drafted in a context that has shifted radically since we put our pens down. At a minimum, the statement needs to address the context that has emerged over the last several weeks.*

especially those of lower economic status and historically underrepresented communities and people of color.

- Continue to learn and share best practices as an organization in our evolving understanding of how best to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.

