

DRAFT ** Directive No. 21-1 Collective Action for Climate Change ** DRAFT

In the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Chesapeake Bay Executive Council committed to *increase the resiliency of the watershed, including its living resources, habitats, public infrastructure, and communities, to withstand adverse impacts from changing environmental and climate conditions*. In recognition of the growing body of science documenting the impacts of climate change and the urgent need for action, we must build upon previous commitments and hasten our efforts.

We acknowledge the consequences of climate change for the Chesapeake Bay region include the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable and disadvantaged populations in both urban and rural areas. These consequences are impacting our farms and forests, cities and towns, ecosystems, and communities with short-term shocks and long-term stressors. Climate change affects our jurisdictions in a variety of ways - from sea level rise, to increased precipitation and flooding, to species migration, to heat waves, and more. While we can address some of these challenges within our jurisdictions, successful restoration of the Chesapeake Bay requires a collaborative response.

We recognize that each partner has established policies and programs to embrace climate adaptation and resilience but, given the magnitude of the threats, we must build on existing efforts as a united partnership. In doing so, we seek to minimize harm to the Chesapeake Bay watershed's critical habitats, living resources, and communities and provide opportunities to protect and diversify local economies. Accordingly, the Executive Council will thoughtfully incorporate and prioritize climate resilience into each of the 2014 Watershed Agreement outcomes to ensure the progress made to date is not lost over time.

Therefore, we commit to address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work to restore the Bay and its watershed. Partners will prioritize communities, working lands, and habitats most vulnerable to ever-increasing risks. We commit to advance our response to climate change impacts on water quality and living resources by applying the best scientific, modeling, monitoring and planning capabilities of the Bay Program. And we commit to connecting Chesapeake Bay restoration outcomes with emerging opportunities in climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

We, therefore, direct the Principals' Staff Committee to:

Address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

- Integrate climate science and adaptation to climate change throughout the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, and direct the Management Board to ensure the partnership's organizational structure effectively advances this integration.
- Direct the Management Board to incorporate climate risks into the management strategies of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement outcomes.
- Work partnership-wide to ensure the science, restoration and partnership programs equitably address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, including

indigenous people, historically underrepresented communities, those of lower economic status, and people of color, taking into account existing social, economic, and health disparities.

- Continuously improve our knowledge of and response to the threats of climate change and report on implementation of this Executive Directive and new challenges at Chesapeake Executive Council annual meetings.

Prioritize communities and habitats most vulnerable to ever-increasing risks.

- ~~Emphasize the continued need to update best management practice design standards to account for the impacts of climate change, using leading predictive models and tools, to insure investments made today continue to yield benefits even as the climate changes.~~
- ~~Prioritize~~Ensure that we focus on achieving our outcomes to conserve and restore wetlands, forest buffers and urban tree canopies for both increased resilience to climate impacts and to assist in meeting national goals for achieving 30 percent of lands and waters conserved by 2030¹.
- Build climate science into environmental literacy programs for students, the public, and decision-makers, with a focus on ensuring inclusion of material on the most vulnerable habitats, people, communities and industries.

Apply the best scientific, modeling, monitoring and planning capabilities of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

- Emphasize the continued need to update best management practice design standards to account for the impacts of climate change, using leading predictive models and tools, to ensure investments made today continue to yield benefits even as the climate changes.
- Determine capacity needed to monitor the impacts of climate change on our natural resources within the existing Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's science programs and evaluate the opportunity to fill those needs with ongoing climate change monitoring programs.
- Improve the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool cost calculator to account for climate change so that the partnership can ensure investments in water quality take into account the impacts of delayed action.

Connect Chesapeake Bay restoration goals with emerging opportunities in climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

¹ President Biden's [Executive Order](#) *Tackling the Climate Crisis and Home and Abroad*, Section 216, Conserving Our Nations Lands and Waters. January 27, 2021

- Recognize and, where feasible, assess and adopt the water quality practices that sequester greenhouse gases, and the climate mitigation practices that reduce nitrogen pollution to watersheds.
- Prioritize the adoption of farming and forestry best management practices to maximize the co-benefits of improved water quality, resilience, carbon sequestration, and soil health.
- Promote greenhouse gas mitigation through restoring coastal ecosystems and enhancing green infrastructure throughout the watershed.
- Utilize conservation finance where appropriate to leverage public and increase private investments, including emerging carbon markets, in Chesapeake Bay restoration.