



Citizens Advisory Committee

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May 26, 2017

The Honorable Terry McAuliffe
Chair, Chesapeake Executive Council
Commonwealth of Virginia
Office of the Governor
1111 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Governor McAuliffe:

Since its inception in 1984, the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) has worked cooperatively and on a nonpartisan basis to advise the Executive Council on restoration and protection activities in the Chesapeake Bay region. In this role, we strongly support Resolution 2017-1 that recommits your leadership to continue support for the Chesapeake Bay Program and encourage each of you to call on Congress to fully fund this vitally important restoration effort.

We firmly believe that with momentum on our side, now is not the time to roll back restoration efforts as proposed by the President's budget. To do so would effectively waste the investments made to date and jeopardize the trust the citizens impart to government to protect them from pollution. Repeated surveys of public opinions document overwhelming support for clean air, clean water, and healthy communities. The Chesapeake Bay partnership effort demonstrates exemplary cost effective and politically popular ways to achieve restoration and protection results.

As independent citizen volunteers, we travel throughout the watershed to learn from diverse communities and organizations about their economic and social connections to the health of their local waterways. Through these interactions we witness innovative programs that produce tremendous value and real results. These include a workforce development initiative called Civic Works in Baltimore that retrains workers and ex-offenders for in-demand living wage green jobs and one in western Virginia with Trout Unlimited to restore stream health and rebuild essential brook trout habitat so wounded veterans are able to access and fish. None of these and many more across our region would be possible without the strong federal leadership and coordination of the Environmental Protection Agency.



Jessica M. Blackburn, CAC Coordinator
612 Hull Street, Suite 101C | Richmond, VA 23224 | (804)775-0953 | jblackburn@allianceforthebay.org |



Eliminating or greatly reducing the Chesapeake Bay Program would send devastating ripples through the watershed communities, at a time when we are just beginning to reap the rewards of decades of investments. We ask you to urge Congress to restore the Bay Program's budget and all of the federal agencies engaged in the restoration effort including NOAA, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, USGS, Forest Service, USDA, Department of Defense and the Army Corps of Engineers to ensure they are able carry out their critical responsibilities under the Bay Program partnership.

Much of the budget goes directly to watershed states to support foundational programs for monitoring and restoration and hundreds of jobs. Not only can states not make up the difference if the Bay Program was defunded or underfunded, the proposed budget cuts would cripple state programs, threaten communities and drinking water sources, and result in tremendous job losses around our region.

We are exceedingly proud of the successes the partnership has achieved so far and urge you and the other Executive Council members to continue being vocal supporters of the Chesapeake Bay Program. We need your help now more than ever.

Thank you for your leadership for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Sincerely,



Paula Jasinski
Chair, Citizens' Advisory Committee



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