



## Chesapeake Bay Program

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### Chesapeake Executive Council

**DECEMBER 8, 1998**

**DIRECTIVE NO 98-1**

# Chesapeake Bay Program Education Initiative

The future well-being of North America's largest and most productive estuary, the Chesapeake Bay, its thousands of tributaries and its 64,000 square miles of watershed will soon rest in the hands of its youngest citizens. These citizens, three million strong in kindergarten through 12th grade, are tomorrow's leaders. They also will be the stewards of the Bay's precious resources including its [fish, crabs and oysters, forests and wetlands](#).

As the [Chesapeake Bay Program](#) partnership, we acknowledge our responsibility to ensure that these future caretakers receive the knowledge and understanding necessary for them to make informed and intelligent decisions relative to their own actions and the actions of others who affect the Bay system. We acknowledge our duty to impart to these young people a sense of individual responsibility and our hope that they develop the skills to form a personal ethic regarding the natural world. Further, we acknowledge that the Chesapeake Bay, its rivers and its watershed provide an authentic, locally-relevant source of environmental information and data that should be used to help advance student learning skills and problem-solving abilities across the entire school curriculum.

Today, throughout the Chesapeake region, the Departments of Education and the many outstanding private environmental organizations in the region offer excellent programs that connect education and the environment. Examples include rigorous watershed, water resource and Bay-related learning standards in educational systems; professional development opportunities for teachers; opportunities for students to participate in Bay and other field experiences that reinforce academic learning standards; the use of high quality classroom materials that address the science, history, economics and cultural significance of our common resources; and voluntary student, teacher and citizen involvement in aquatic stewardship projects. Private environmental organizations in the Bay region also offer nationally-recognized training programs and curriculum.

Nevertheless, even with good policies and programs in place, we still recognize that there is a need to more fully connect the environment to mainstream educational efforts. As the Bay Program, we want to forge this connection by creating stronger links between educators, resource managers, educational administrators, environmental policy-makers, the scientific research community, schools, school districts,

statewide education agencies, state and federal natural resource and environmental protection agencies, the jurisdictions and environmental organizations in the region. We also want to foster opportunities to use actual data from monitoring and research activities as the basis for classroom and field education in our region's schools.

Finally, we recognize that while the educational community's tradition of independence is strongly held, there is an increased need today to engage in new partnerships to get the job done.

*Therefore to Further Our Commitments, the Chesapeake Bay Program Will:*

- Invite the Departments of Education in each jurisdiction- Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia- to become more active partners in the Bay Program.
  - Each Department of Education is encouraged to summarize annually, for its Chesapeake Executive Council member, ongoing educational programs in kindergarten through 12th grade that support Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts beginning in 1999, prior to the [Executive Council meeting](#).
  - Each Department of Education is encouraged to increase the involvement of students in educational programs which support Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration and protection efforts. Existing youth groups and forums should be involved and new groups created when necessary.
- Support an existing or newly-created interagency education group in each jurisdiction. Each jurisdiction's group will work to further its own programs and to champion the efforts, goals and objectives of the Chesapeake Bay Program.
  - The interagency group in each jurisdiction should include as members at least:
    - A representative of the Chesapeake Bay Program
    - Representatives of the education, environment, agriculture and natural resource agencies
    - Teachers
    - Representatives of private nonprofit organizations involved in environmental or informal education
    - A representative of higher education
  - Each interagency education group will report annually on its progress and problems to its Department of Education, beginning in 1999. Each Department of Education should include the interagency group's annual report in its own annual report to the Executive Council.
- Convene an Education Summit of the four interagency education groups in 1999 and every two years thereafter. The outcomes of the Education Summit will be reported to the Executive Council at its annual meeting. Education Summits should address the following:
  - Encouraging Chesapeake Bay Program partners, nonprofit organizations, higher education institutions, informal educational institutions and others engaged in environmental education to work in cooperation with the departments of education in the Bay region.
  - Improving science achievement by students as measured by formal assessments in each jurisdiction.

- Sharing information and resources that use the Bay and its watershed as a source of locally-relevant environmental information and data in school curricula.
  - Packaging and distributing clearly interpreted data and information on the Internet and through other methods for teachers and students to learn more about the health of the Bay watershed and the overall restoration and protection effort.
  - Reviewing teacher certification requirements and standards for environmental education in each state and the District of Columbia to determine how they include Chesapeake Bay restoration themes such as habitat protection and restoration, pollution prevention, the concept of watersheds and the role of the individual in the restoration effort. If these themes are not addressed, the Education Summit should explore how they could be incorporated into certification requirements and standards.
  - Involving students and teachers in on-the-ground restoration projects including Chesapeake Bay Program efforts such as riparian forest buffer restoration and volunteer water quality monitoring.
  - Providing more professional development opportunities related to environmental education for teachers and other education professionals.
  - Highlighting success stories and other information on pilot programs for schools that more fully connect the environment to existing educational efforts in order to improve student academic performance and increase student involvement in voluntary stewardship activities.
- Reorganize the Chesapeake Bay Program's Communications Subcommittee into the Communications and Education Subcommittee and charge the subcommittee with coordinating the commitments outlined in this directive. To ensure coordination, the subcommittee will create an Education Workgroup that should include representatives from each of the four interagency education groups. The Communications and Education Subcommittee also will encourage the addition of education department officials, teachers, students and to other Bay Program committees where appropriate.

## **December 8, 1998**

FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND, *Parris N. Glendening, Governor*

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA, *James M. Seif, Secretary of PA DEP*

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, *James S. Gilmore, III, Governor*

FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, *Marion Barry, Mayor*

FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION, *Del. John F. Wood, Jr., Chairman*

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, *Peter D. Robertson, Deputy Administrator of EPA*

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[Return to top of this document](#)

For more information, contact the Chesapeake Bay Program Office, 410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109, Annapolis, MD 21403, Tel: (800) YOUR-BAY, Fax: (410) 267-5777.

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