

Chesapeake Executive Council

Resolution in Support of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership



AS OF JUNE 8, 2017, WHEREAS the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership began in 1983 with the signing of the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement by Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Chesapeake Bay Commission; and

WHEREAS, the partnership has steadily grown over more than three decades to include the states of Delaware, New York and West Virginia as well as numerous public and private institutions, organizations and agencies; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership affirmed its commitment to Chesapeake Bay restoration as recently as 2014 with the signing of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*; and

WHEREAS, the science, policy and budgetary actions promoted by the partnership have provided a solid foundation for improvements in water quality, habitat, fisheries and a range of critical restoration issues; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership has promoted, funded and implemented shared responses to bay challenges and opportunities by local, state and federal institutions and agencies and the private sector; and

WHEREAS, a 2014 peer-reviewed study estimated that the economic benefits of a restored Chesapeake Bay to the region's economy could reach \$130 billion annually; and

WHEREAS, the state-federal partnership has been hailed as a model conservation and restoration program – a successful example of cooperative federalism – on an unprecedented scale; and

WHEREAS, the independent volunteer advisors of the Citizens, Local Government and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committees support the critical and unique role of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership and have encouraged us to advocate for continued federal support; and

WHEREAS, Section 117 of the Clean Water Act calls specifically for the signatories of the various Chesapeake Bay Agreements to "achieve and maintain...the water quality requirements necessary to restore living resources in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem"; and

WHEREAS, the EPA is mandated to have a Chesapeake Bay Program office that supports the states and the district through "implementing and coordinating science, research, modeling, support services, monitoring, data collection and other activities"; and

WHEREAS, federal agencies, including the EPA, the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, Defense, Transportation, Commerce and others, have contributed significantly in both money and actions, to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay, and

WHEREAS, the partnership is at the mid-point of a fifteen year-long plan to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment loadings to the Chesapeake Bay, known as the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL); and

WHEREAS, the scientific, technical and financial support from EPA and other federal agencies are important contributors to the success of the TMDL and the benefits that will accrue from improved water quality; and

WHEREAS, the partnership is at an important milestone as it approaches the mid-point assessment of the TMDL this year with a goal to have all actions in place by 2025; and

WHEREAS, in 2016 water quality in the Chesapeake Bay continued a trend of improvement, including record acres of bay grasses, smaller "dead zones" without oxygen and decreased loads of nutrients and sediment from most tributaries; and

WHEREAS, continued progress is based on maintaining and accelerating the scientific, policy and funding partnership, including both public and private sectors that the Chesapeake Bay Program represents.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Chesapeake Executive Council:

Calls on the President and the United States Congress to continue the current level of federal support for the Chesapeake Bay Program and the participating partners for the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, including the active, coordinating role of the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that science, monitoring, modeling and restoration continue to be undertaken with the full participation of local, state and federal agencies, and private sector entities as appropriate;

NOW BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, we, the signatories* of this resolution, will distribute this resolution to the President of the United States, members of Congress and other supporters of this federal, state and local partnership so they may have the sense of the Council on this important matter.

Signed:

For the Chesapeake Bay Commission _____

For the State of Delaware _____

For the District of Columbia _____

For the State of Maryland _____

For the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania _____

For the State of New York _____

For the Commonwealth of Virginia _____

For the State of West Virginia _____

*One Chesapeake Executive Council member, the EPA Administrator on behalf of the United States, has not signed this resolution. Federal law and practice prohibit federal officials from adopting advocacy statements contained in this resolution. The EPA did not participate in the drafting of this resolution and its contents do not indicate Agency opposition to, or support for, any of the specific actions outlined in this resolution.