

Chesapeake Executive Council

Directive No. 21-1 Collective Action for Climate Change



In the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, the Chesapeake 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 Chesapeake 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 Chesapeake 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 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 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, considering 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 Directive and new challenges at Chesapeake Executive Council annual meetings.
- **Prioritize communities and habitats most vulnerable to ever-increasing risks.**
 - Prioritize 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% 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 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 consider the impacts of delayed action.
- **Connect Chesapeake Bay restoration goals with emerging opportunities in climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.**
 - 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.

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

As Chesapeake Bay Program partners, we acknowledge that this Directive is voluntary and subject to the availability of appropriated funds. This Directive is not a contract or an assistance agreement. This Directive is not intended to, and does not create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any signatory or its respective agencies and employees. We also understand that this Directive does not pre-empt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory.

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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



FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
on behalf of the Federal Government and the
Federal Leadership Committee for the Chesapeake Bay
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Department of Transportation


