

Agricultural Technical Assistance Directive

Discussion of Next Steps and Jurisdictional Feedback

April 18th, 2019

	Directive Commitment
1	<p><u>Technical Assistance (TA)</u></p> <p>Strive to provide stable and sufficient technical assistance in order to help farmers implement the conservation practices necessary to meet Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals.</p>

Next Steps?

Summarized Feedback from States:

Identifying Gaps:

- Gaps addressed in WIP development and during 2-yr milestones
- Support for aggregated analysis of identified gaps across states to identify common needs and opportunities within watershed. **(WHO would do this?)**

Addressing Gaps:

- Increase farmer collaboration with SWCDs, TSPs, NRCS, and Extension
- Increased and stabilized funding
- Align EPA and NRCS priorities in CBW

	Directive Commitment
2	<u>Technical Assistance</u> Diversify and expand the network of public, private and nonprofit providers of technical and financial assistance to ensure that on-farm support is available to meet the agricultural sector load reductions.

Funding Support:

EPA-319 and CBIG

USDA – Contribution Agreements

NFWF –SWG and INSR

SWG = Small Watershed Grant

INSR = Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction

Increase and stabilize funding

Focused training on ag engineering practices and principles

- NGOs with specialized staff (e.g., Stroud, CBF, Nature Conservancy, Farmland Trusts)
- Existing structure within civil and environmental engineering firms

NRCS TSP

- Streamline training or alternatives?

Service Providers:

- Quality Assurance

	Directive Commitment
3	<u>Technical Assistance</u> Expand technical assistance capacity through the use of cooperative agreements and other tools that combine federal, state, local and private resources to target priority agricultural resource concerns.

Federal Agency Partner Roles:

- EPA facilitate development of proposal with federal partners regarding better alignment with state data needs
 - Bring to AgWG for review.
- Align NRCS priorities more closely with state priorities.
- Tracking & Reporting: USGS and NRCS obtain jurisdictional comment for improving the existing agreement and methods to improve double counting protections.
- Improving equity:
 - Ex: NRCS SWAT require 100% work on NRCS priorities for only 50% funding.

Fed-Fed and Fed-State agreements:
EPA should be arbiter

	Directive Commitment
4	<p><u>Technical Assistance</u></p> <p>Enhance and coordinate critical agricultural conservation programs to ensure they offer the flexibility and capacity needed to incentivize farmers to install practices, including riparian forest buffers, to help meet the goals of the Bay TMDL.</p>

WIP III: Extensive state-wide outreach and listening sessions

How are other states providing assistance?

- What has been effective?
- What are lessons learned?

Efficient use of funding:

- Focus on practices to maximum nutrient and sediment reductions

Flexibility: Commitment from USDA to be responsive to state requests for flexibility.

	Directive Commitment
5	<p><u>Workforce Development</u></p> <p>Enhance the job climate for government technical assistance professionals by exploring how to make training and certification more streamlined and accessible, along with the development of two-year certification programs, innovative training forums and education loan assistance programs.</p>

Several States have initiatives in progress

- Synthesis by AgWG?

Putting Training to Use:

- Certified professionals need to be linked to farmer needing/requiring assistance

Land Grant Universities need support

- CBP and partners rely on their work
- Requires funding

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	Directive Commitment	Action Lead (assigned by MB)
6	<u>Evaluation</u> Report on progress made toward this directive at the September 2019 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting.	Management Board

General Comments:

- AVOID REDUNDANCY (In light of Phase 3 WIP development and implementation.
- More commitment from EPA/CBPO staff

