

Dating back to the 1980's, the Chesapeake Executive Council has created Advisory Committees to engage the diverse interests and roles of those who live, work, and learn within the watershed. As the largest non-forest land use in the watershed, agriculture can and will be part of the solutions for a healthier Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Indeed, progress will not be achieved without substantial efforts from the agricultural sector, including urban agriculture.

To maximize the potential for accelerated adoption of agricultural conservation practices while fostering a vibrant and economically sustainable agricultural industry, it is critical that the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership be advised directly by farmers, including urban farmers, and other agricultural industry stakeholders who have an in-depth understanding of the diverse farming operations across the watershed and best management practices for agricultural lands.

A new Agricultural Advisory Committee would facilitate greater engagement of the agricultural sector in the decision-making process of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership and serve as a voice for producers and industry to Chesapeake Bay Program leadership by providing high-level policy recommendations to the Program's Executive Council, Principals' Staff Committee and Management Board. Committee members will also help to inform their agricultural networks on the goals and progress of the Program.

Therefore, we commit to establishing an Agricultural Advisory Committee that will convene in 2025. To achieve this commitment, we agree to:

- Affirm the Agricultural Advisory Committee bylaws adopted by the Principals' Staff Committee in June 2024;
- Secure sufficient funding to support the Agricultural Advisory Committee and fulfill its mission as described herein and in its bylaws, including the hiring of staff, convening of meetings, and publication of materials and work products;
- Direct the Secretary or Commissioner of Agriculture in our respective jurisdiction and the Director of the District Department of Energy and Environment to appoint two members to the Agricultural Advisory Committee; and
- Commit to at least one appointment per jurisdiction being a producer and to diversify appointments to ensure a cross-section of the agricultural sector is represented.

As Chesapeake Bay Program partners, we acknowledge that this Directive is voluntary and subject to the availability of 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.