



**Stakeholders' Advisory Committee**  
TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

**Stakeholders' Advisory Committee**  
**Meeting Agenda**  
**February 19, 2026**  
**Virtual**

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**Virtual Meeting**  
**Join Zoom Meeting**  
**9:30am - 3:00pm**

**Meeting Goal:** Understand the 2026 Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) landscape with briefings on progress, proposed changes, and insights from watershed leaders to help the Stakeholders' Committee align their priorities with this year's Partnership decisions and activities.

**Meeting Objectives:**

- (1) Conversations with Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) leaders from Pennsylvania and Virginia.
- (2) Briefing on the annual Bay Barometer progress report.
- (3) 2025 Executive Council (EC) follow-up
  - (a) Briefings on implementing the EC charges
    - (i) Governance and Structure
    - (ii) Integrating sovereign Federal Tribes and Indigenous knowledge
  - (b) Response to the Stakeholders' Committee letter of recommendations

- 9:30am      Call to Order and Welcome.....Abel Olivo, Chair**
- Member Introductions
    - Guests introduce themselves in the chat
  - Chair's Opening Remarks
    - Overview of meeting agenda and objectives
  - Brief Member Announcements (Open to All Members)
- 9:45am      Business Items and Advisory Committee Briefings.....Abel Olivo, Chair**
- Approval of draft December 2025 Meeting Minutes
  - Advisory Committee Coordination- Joint Letters
  - Updates from the Advisory Committees' Leadership
    - **Agricultural**  
Chair, Bill Fink, Director of Ag Operations, Country View Family Farms
    - **Scientific and Technical**  
Chair, Bill Dennison, Vice-President for Science Application, University of MD Center for Environmental Science (UMCES)
    - **Local Government**  
Vice-Chair, Josh Hastings, Wicomico County, MD

*Materials:*    [Draft Dec 2025 Stakeholders' Meeting Minutes](#)  
[Joint AC Chairs' Letter to the EC Dec 2025](#)  
[Joint AC cover letter to VA Governor-Elect Spanberger Jan 2026](#)  
[STAC Nov 2025 Meeting Synthesis: Decision Making and Governance](#)

**10:15am      Conversation with new PSC Chair.....The Honorable Jessica Shirley**  
**Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection**

Secretary Shirley will offer remarks on Pennsylvania's priorities for advancing shared Chesapeake Bay watershed goals, her perspectives of upcoming changes to the CBP's structure and governance, and the draft Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) response to the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee's 2025 letter of recommendations to the Executive Council.

*Background and Context:* Jessica Shirley serves as the Secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (PA DEP), playing a pivotal role in the guidance of the department in its mission to protect and preserve Pennsylvania's environment while fostering sustainable and equitable practices.

At the 2025 Executive Council (EC) meeting, Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro was elected as 2026 EC Chair. Secretary Shirley represents Governor Shapiro by serving as the Chair of the PSC. The PSC works on behalf of the Executive Council to translate their vision into policy and action. Members of the PSC include high-level state and federal leaders.

*Materials:*    [draft PSC Response to the Stakeholders' 2025 Recommendations](#)  
[Secretary Shirley's Brief Bio](#)

**10:45am      Break**

**11:00am      Conversation with new Virginia Leadership.....The Honorable David Bulova**  
**VA Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources**

Secretary Bulova will offer remarks on Virginia's plans and priorities for advancing shared Chesapeake Bay watershed goals.

*Background and Context:* David Bulova was recently appointed as Secretary for Virginia's Natural and Historic Resources to advance VA Governor Spanberger's environmental priorities. The Secretary oversees five agencies that protect and restore the Commonwealth's natural and historic resources. Secretary Bulova represents Virginia on the PSC. Secretary Bulova is a former House Delegate of Virginia's 11th District and twice served as chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

*Materials:*    [Secretary Bulova's Brief Bio](#)

**11:30am      Presentation: Bay Barometer.....[Rachel Felver](#)  
Chesapeake Bay Program Communications Director  
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay**

Rachel will offer a 15-min briefing followed by Q&A and Committee discussion.

*Background and Context:* The Bay Barometer is an annual publication of insights into the health of the Bay watershed and progress toward its restoration and protection. Each year it reports on updated progress of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* Outcomes established in 2014.

*Materials:* pending, publication on Wednesday, Feb 18

**Noon              Lunch Break**

**12:45pm      Presentation: Proposed Changes to CBP Governance and Structure.....Doug Bell,  
Senior Technical Advisor, EPA CBP Office**

Doug will offer a 15-min briefing followed by Q&A and Committee discussion.

*Background and Context:* The 2025 Executive Council approved the PSC's recommendation to restructure the CBP organization to enhance the efficiency, coordination and effectiveness needed to implement the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.

Initial changes will focus on two primary levels of the CBP: Program Leadership and Program Implementation. By July 1, 2026, the PSC will finalize the membership, leadership, responsibilities and decision-making protocols associated with these two structural components. The Management Board will be eliminated.

Key Interim Dates:

April 7th, the PSC meeting to review the draft reorganizational structure.

June 30th, the PSC meeting for final decision.

Members are invited to consider how proposed changes impact CBP decision-making, streamlining, transparency, and accountability. The Stakeholders' Committee's new short-term Accountability Workgroup is a logical forum for interested members to further discuss feedback. Marty Qually, LGAC Chair and Adams County Commissioner (PA), is serving as the Advisory Committee liaison to the signatory team working on governance and structure.

*Materials:*    [CBP Governance & Accountability Recommendations](#)  
[Current CBP Organizational Chart](#)  
[Proposed CBP Organizational Changes](#)  
[Stakeholders' July 2025 Feedback on Governance and Accountability](#)

**1:15pm Presentations: Tribal Partnership in the Chesapeake Bay Program**

**Leila Duman, Chesapeake & Coastal Bays Restoration Officer,  
MD Department of Natural Resources**

- Background, Process, and Timeline
- Considerations of Roles & Responsibilities of the Signatories to the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*

**Melissa Ann Ehrenreich, Executive Director, Indigenous Conservation Council of the Chesapeake Bay**

- Key Elements Important to the Indigenous Conservation Council's Tribal Membership

*Background and Context:*

The Indigenous Conservation Council (ICC) signed and submitted a resolution to the Chesapeake Bay Program in January 2025 (modified in July 2025), requesting the following:

- Include the Indigenous Conservation Council as a signatory to the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* to support Tribal Nations in their right to exercise their treaty rights and serve as full partners in its protection and restoration.
- Establish and fund an Indigenous Guardianship Program as a priority within the *Agreement's* revised goals and strategies that would direct funding to the ICC as a new jurisdictional Signatory partner to be sub-granted to Tribal Nation members to build their tribal capacity.
- Expand the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) with an additional standing seat committed to sharing and honoring Indigenous science within the partnership and building the engagement of Indigenous scientists to enhance the effectiveness of the partnership and respect for Indigenous science.

By July 1, 2026, the PSC is charged with working with the federally recognized tribal nations to develop recommendations on how best to include tribes across the watershed in the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership.

*Materials:*

[2025 EC Charge: Tribes as a Formal and Enduring Partner in the Chesapeake Bay Program](#)

**2:05pm Break**

**2:15pm Presentation: Coordinator's Report**

- Progress on Action Items
  - Letter on Stakeholders' Advisory Committee successes
- Stakeholders' Accountability Workgroup
- Q&A and Committee Discussion

*Materials: pending, Coordinator's Report*

**2:35pm      Discussion: Reflections on the Day’s Takeaways.....All Members**

**2:50pm      Wrap up and Action Items**

**3:00pm      Adjourn**

**Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee 2026 Meeting Dates**

May 20-21, 2026 Lancaster, PA (overlapping with the Choose Clean Water Coalition Conference)

September 16-17, 2026 (location TBD)

December 11, 2026 (virtual)

*The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay is honored to support the appointed volunteers of the Stakeholders’ Advisory Committee. We are committed to serving as an unbiased convener so the members can achieve their mission through learning and discussion. Views expressed by the members and their guest speakers are not those of the Alliance.*