

Stakeholders' Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council

May 22, 2024 [Merriweather Lakeside Hotel](#), Room Lakeside A

Briefing and Advanced Questions

Excerpt from the agenda

**1-2:00 p.m. Conversation with the Principals' Staff Committee Chair.....[Secretary Josh Kurtz](#)
Department of Natural Resources**

Maryland Governor Moore's Administration is chairing the 2024 Executive Council. Secretary Kurtz will share his vision of leadership of the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) and the Beyond 2025 effort, discuss PSC topics of focus, ideas for engagement with the Advisory Committees at the Chesapeake Bay Program, and discuss the Stakeholders' Advisory Committee's priorities including the role the partnership has in land use decision-making.

Questions collected from the Stakeholders' Subcommittees

The success of many clean water and living resources goals will depend on maintaining healthy habitats with conserved lands protected from future development, its associated harmful levels of impervious surfaces, and the prevention of forests and wetlands loss.

- What do you see as the role of the CBP in land conservation and land-use planning and what more can the CBP, federal agencies, and states do to meet the tremendous needs necessary for restoring the Bay Watershed?

In our estimation, historical success of the Chesapeake Bay Program has hinged on the commitment of leadership. Lately, we have seen very limited participation at the annual Executive Council meetings.

- As the partnership focuses on beyond 2025 with an intention to amend the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, thinking through the lens of what you would like to accomplish in your tenure as PSC chair, how do you see your role in encouraging the signatories to be engaged at the highest executive levels and bring their creative and ambitious energy to the effort?

Relatedly, according to the CBP Governance Document, the PSC can use super-majority voting to move initiatives forward. This was used when developing the *2014 Chesapeake Watershed Agreement* goals and outcomes. It allowed the majority of states to collectively work on important issues while also giving other states the chance to opt-out of outcomes that they were not inclined to pursue.

- Our Committee is not united in our view, but some of us see an unintended consequence of consensus—that it defaults the full partnership to the least amount of commonly held effort. What is your view on the partnership's preference for consensus and the tension with the need to move forward?

2024 Priority Topics developed by the Stakeholders' Subcommittees

Water Quality Subcommittee- Beyond 2025, revised Watershed Agreement, and Bay TMDL Accountability

Conservation & Land Use Subcommittee- Understanding the threats to development and the role of the CBP in land use development to protect forests and wetlands

Stewardship & Engagement Subcommittee- Equitable access to grants and DEIJ at the CBP and within the Stakeholders' Committee

Highlights of 2023 Recommendations to the Executive Council

- (1) Relying on the work already completed by the Forest Buffer and Wetlands Actions Plans, charge the PSC to approve within six months the specific actionable items for each jurisdiction to accelerate the implementation and close the progress gaps for water quality restoration.
- (2) We strongly recommend the continued and sustained funding for the high-resolution land-use and land-change data and analysis, so local governments can rely on complete assessments of existing and trending losses of tree canopy and wetlands for land-use decision-making.
- (3) We encourage the Executive Council to work with the Chesapeake Watershed Congressional Delegation to ensure the next Farm Bill adequately supports Chesapeake Bay restoration and conservation Goals outlined in the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*. Additionally, we encourage the Governors and DC Mayor to commit to preserving forests and wetlands by enhancing their conservation programs and identifying matching funds for potential Farm Bill conservation provisions.