

**Protocol to Establish an Open Enrollment Period for changes to NEIEN Progress Reporting Requirements for Jurisdictions**

**Approved by the Watershed Technical Workgroup, 2/4/2013**

**Background**

At its August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012 meeting, the Watershed Technical Workgroup (WTWG) discussed how to improve the current progress reporting system. The jurisdictions currently submit best management practices (BMPs) using the National Environmental Information Exchange Network (NEIEN). This data must be validated by the network, and then forwarded to Scenario Builder. This process is governed by a complex set of codes and reporting rules that are documented by support staff in an appendix (hereafter referred to as the Appendix) and a data element table (hereafter referred to as the Table). Occasionally changes are made to these codes and reporting rules that are documented in the Appendix and the Table. These changes are made to accommodate new information such as: new BMPs approved by the Partnership; different relationships between data elements; alterations to existing BMP names and/or unit types, etc. The jurisdictions suggested that changes to the Appendix and the Table should only occur during a specified time period of the year to make it easier for states to understand the rules and codes applying to a single progress year's submission of data. This protocol was approved by the WTWG and the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team in February, 2013.

**Approved Protocol**

The WTWG proposes that changes to NEIEN (and the associated Appendix and Table or other supporting documents) that correspond specifically to the Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions' reporting occur only during the time period beginning on January 1 and ending on August 31 of any progress reporting year. During this time period, any number of changes to the Appendix, Table and supporting documents can be suggested by jurisdictions and Chesapeake Bay Program Staff, and accepted if appropriate. NEIEN support staff can also recommend changes during this time period to the jurisdictions or Chesapeake Bay Program Staff, and make appropriate changes as accepted. The Appendix, Table and supporting documents as approved on August 31 of any progress reporting year will not be altered for any reason except in the following cases:

- 1) A new BMP or new BMP information is approved by the Chesapeake Bay Program.
  - a. If this occurs, the newly approved information must be presented to the WTWG by no later than the initial progress reporting deadline for any given year so all jurisdictions are aware of the changes, and the appropriate supporting materials describing the change such as the Appendix and Table, must be provided to all jurisdiction's reporting teams by no later than the initial progress reporting deadline for any given year.
- 2) Minor changes to the system are required to accommodate a jurisdiction's reporting data.
  - a. If this occurs, the newly approved information must be presented to the WTWG so all jurisdictions are aware of the changes, and the appropriate supporting materials describing the change such as the Appendix and Table, must be provided to all jurisdictions' reporting teams.

It is the responsibility of the jurisdictions to report data using the August 31 version of the Appendix, Table and supporting documents (or those documents accepted after August 31 as in the cases described above), and correcting their data if it fails to meet the requirements as outlined in the Appendix, Table or supporting documents.

The WTWG feels that these requirements will offer states a static set of reporting rules for each progress year data call, while allowing the Partnership and support staff opportunities to make and document changes to the reporting rules when appropriate.