



Stakeholders' Advisory Committee

TO THE CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Member Brief Biographies (updated August 2025)

DELAWARE

Vacant

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Hamid Karimi

After retiring as Deputy Director of the District Columbia Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), Hamid began overseeing a special project focusing on the restoration of Kingman Island in the Anacostia River. Hamid spent over 35 years in various positions at DOEE in the environmental field to support initiatives for conservation and environmental stewardship. Hamid's graduate work at Ohio University was investigating drought tolerance in halophytes and although his PhD is in Botany, he retooled at the DOEE working in a number of capacities in managing programs for aquatic resources involving planning, analysis, policy development, regulatory control and enforcement. He also provided technical assistance on habitat and watershed restoration, NPDES, and ambient monitoring. For a period, he served as the QA Officer for the department and oversaw management of programs in controlling contamination from underground storage tanks, lead, pesticides, Brownfields and hazardous waste, and radiation hazards. He has managed the District's Section 319 nonpoint source control program including its permit review, inspection and enforcement programs for stormwater management, sediment and erosion control and its floodplain management program. He has been affiliated with a number of environmental committees in Chesapeake Bay Program, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and environmental advocacy groups. He is currently a commissioner on the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB).

Julie Lawson - Co-Chair, Membership & Governance Subcommittee

Julie is an environmental professional and education advocate in Washington, DC. She is currently serving as the DOEE's liaison to the University of DC. recently served as Director of the Office of the Clean City under Mayor Muriel Bowser. Clean City develops interagency strategies and community engagement on issues of trash, rodents, pet waste, and civic stewardship. As the co-founder and former executive director of Trash Free Maryland, she spearheaded passage of legislation to ban polystyrene foam food packaging around the DC Metro area, and expand public space recycling and strengthen penalties for illegal dumping in Maryland. The Chesapeake Bay Trash Trawl project identified a severe problem with microplastics pollution in the Bay and supported passage of a strong ban on microbeads in personal care products in

Maryland. As the former chair of the DC Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation, she organized a citywide grassroots campaign to support passage of the Anacostia River Cleanup and Protection Act, the first law in the nation to require a fee for single-use shopping bags. She previously worked at the Anacostia Watershed Society and ran Communication Visual, a small marketing and design studio. Julie is also active in her community, serving as president of the PTA at Whittier Education Campus. She holds a bachelor's degree in linguistics from Haverford College. She lives in the Takoma neighborhood with her son, Owen.

Vaughn Perry

Vaughn Perry is the Director of the Skyland Workforce Center, a project of Building Bridges Across the River, where he manages a partnership of nonprofit organizations that provide employment services for local residents. Before taking on that role, he was the Director of Equity for the 11th Street Bridge Park. An “almost” DC native, Vaughn has been a long-term resident and homeowner in Ward 8. Vaughn's research interests focus on ecojustice pedagogies, community engagement and green job/skill development. Vaughn holds a bachelor's degree in IT from Strayer University and a master's degree in Project Management from George Washington University.

MARYLAND

Andrew Der

With a total of 30 years of experience working within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, Andrew is currently principal of Andrew T. Der and Associates, LLC practicing in the water resources consulting industry regionally and nationally since 2013. Prior to that, Mr. Der was Director of Environmental Services for two civil engineering firms, and previously completed 18 years of service at the Maryland Department of the Environment leaving as a manager in the Wetlands and Waterways Program. His specialties include regulation, environmental assessment and watershed studies, advocacy, compliance, permitting, feasibility studies, nonpoint source pollutant management, wetland and stream mitigation, water quality monitoring, NEPA, NPDES, and TMDL. Mr. Der also teaches seminars, publishes industry-related and natural resources articles, is a member of several industry and citizen advisory committees, recipient of numerous awards of recognition, and provides expert testimony.

Verna Harrison

Verna is principal of Verna Harrison Associates, LLC, a consulting and philanthropic advising firm, specializing in helping foundations and advocates achieve goals to provide clean water for all. Between 2003-2010, as the first Executive Director of The Keith Campbell Foundation for the Environment, she guided the establishment of the Foundation and managed the development and execution of its \$65 million grant making in the Chesapeake region. She was co-founder and co-chair of the Chesapeake Bay Funders Network. For the previous 20 years she served as Assistant Secretary of the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, with responsibility for Maryland's Forest, Park and Wildlife Service, Natural Resources Police, Maryland Environmental Trust, and Tidewater Administration. During that period, she had lead responsibility for state-wide coordination/implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Program for three MD Governors. Earlier in her career she was Assistant Legislative Officer for the Governor of Maryland, Legislative Officer of the Maryland Department of Transportation and staff of the Maryland Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee.

Kate Patton- Chair, Conservation & Land Use Subcommittee

Kate Patton served as the Executive Director of Lower Shore Land Trust from 2006 until 2024. During her tenure at LSLT, she added nearly 10,000 acres and 61 conservation easements to its portfolio for nearly 25,000 acres protected. Prior to her role as ED of LSLT, she owned and operated the Globe Theater, in Berlin, MD, for 16 years. Her experiences in the business community include serving as President of the Berlin Chamber of Commerce, Chair of the Worcester County Arts Council and she was instrumental in developing longstanding Berlin events, including the monthly Arts Night and the successful application for Berlin's designation as an Arts and Entertainment District. In 2002 she received the Governor's Award of Excellence for Small Business in the Arts. Kate's environmental background includes working with the citizen's group Clean Water Action after graduating from the University of Richmond in 1986. Since her retirement she has been working on restoration projects at her home property, including the installation of pollinator meadows and removal of invasive species.

Daphne Pee - Co-Chair, Membership & Governance Subcommittee

Daphne Pee is an environmental professional with 20 years of experience as a science communicator. With a B.S. in Marine Biology (University of Maryland) and a Masters of Environmental Management in Coastal Environmental Management (Duke University), she spent 13 years conducting water quality education and programming in a pretty traditional manner: provide information to the public and hope they do something. They usually don't. She is currently completing a Certificate in Applied Research in Communication at Johns Hopkins University with the goal of improving how environmental organizations foster behavior change and engage diverse audiences.

Abel Olivo- Chair

Abel Olivo is the Executive Director of Defensores de la Cuenca, which translates to Watershed Defenders, a non-profit dedicated to engaging Latinos and Spanish-speakers in watershed-related issues and experiences. A community activist in Prince George's County, MD, Olivo uses his insights and perspectives as a former lobbyist & advocate and non-profit executive to bring resources to the Latino community. Olivo has extensive experience in developing and implementing policy and engagement campaigns to maximize reach, impact, and message. Prior to founding Defensores de la Cuenca, Olivo worked in the environmental non-profit sector engaging the Latino community, he was a stay-at-home dad for four years, and previous to that, he lobbied at the federal level and advocated in the highest levels of government on issues from large infrastructure projects and environmental impacts to banking and housing finance to education policy. Abel is very active in his community, teaching English as a Second Language at his church, serving as a member of the Cheverly Planning Board, a member of the Board of Directors for the Cheverly Swim and Racquet Club, and a member of the Board of Directors for Audubon Naturalist Society. He was recognized as a Regional Environmental Champion in 2020 at the Naturally Latino Conference for his outstanding work to engage the Latino and Spanish-speaking communities in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan region. The son of migrant farm workers and the first in his family to graduate from college, Olivo earned his BA in Political Science from The Ohio State University and is a proud Buckeye. He now lives in Prince George's County, with his spouse Aimee, and their two sons.

Sara Ramotnik- Co-Chair, Water Quality Subcommittee

Sara Ramotnik is the program and membership coordinator at the Choose Clean Water Coalition, where she works with nearly 300 organizations to advocate for clean rivers and streams in all communities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. She leads the Coalition's state policy program and agriculture workgroup, focusing on grassroots advocacy efforts to support clean water policy priorities. From a young age, Sara knew she wanted to dedicate her career to conserving and restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. She is deeply committed to safeguarding our natural resources while also working to expand public access opportunities across the watershed. Sara holds a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science and Policy with a concentration in Economics from the University of Maryland.

Charlie Stek

Charlie served for 28 years as project director and policy advisor for Senator Paul Sarbanes (D-MD), Rep. Clarence Long (D-MD) and assisting Senator Ben Cardin's transition to the U.S. Senate. In those capacities he played a role in shaping numerous federal environmental, transportation and public works statutes; bringing federal assistance to the State of Maryland and its local governments; and enacting many bills to advance the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Charlie played a key role in winning Administration and Congressional support for the \$700 million Poplar Island restoration project – the largest habitat restoration project ever undertaken in the Chesapeake Bay. He retired from the Senate in 2007 and established his own consulting business – Environmental Stewardship Strategies – and serves as an advisor on policy for numerous organizations. He was awarded a NOAA Environmental Education award in 2009, the Captain John Smith Explorer Award by the Chesapeake Bay Commission and The Conservation Fund in 2007, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay's Environmental Leadership Award in 2007, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's Conservationist of the Year in 2004, and numerous other awards and recognitions.

Alisonya Poole

Alisonya Poole is an environmental planner who focuses on architecture, urban design, and community engagement. She has a Master of Architecture from Hampton University and dual master's degrees in Urban Design and Geography with a minor focus on Community Engagement and Urban Forestry from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNCC). She has over nine years of professional experience in architectural, environmental, and urban design for public agencies and the private sector. She is a Program Analyst with the District Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE) and Founder of A.E.P. Consulting LLC. She specializes in working with communities on sustainable and resilient urban environmental design, urban ecology, environmental design, and environmental equity. As an action-oriented practitioner, she is enthusiastic about complete streets, biophilia, and livable green cities. Alisonya dedicates most of her time to community engagement, policy analysis, regional planning, green infrastructure, and best management practices. In her free time, she enjoys painting, traveling, and spending time in nature. She lives in Anne Arundel County with her turtle Franklin Michelangelo a.k.a. Smoosh.

NEW YORK

vacant

PENNSYLVANIA

John Dawes

John is the Administrator for the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds. Grants from this foundation have resulted in the restoration of over 900 miles of rivers and streams in the Commonwealth. He served as an alternate Commissioner on Governor Ridge's 21st Century Commission on the Environment and was part of a policy team for the Heinz Endowments Environmental Program. He serves as Board Chair of the Environmental Integrity Project, which has done well respected work on data sets which apply to actual outcomes of Bay restoration. John was Chairman of the PA Abandoned Mine Lands Campaign which was successful in getting the industry-supported funds reauthorized in Congress in 2006. John is an Angus breeder on his Huntingdon County farm. John is the former Chair of CAC.

Matt Ehrhart - Co-Chair, Water Quality Subcommittee

Matt is the Director of Watershed Restoration at the Stroud Water Research Center. He manages Stroud's multi-state restoration program, advises numerous funders and their grantees on restoration efforts, and provides training for conservation professionals and volunteers on restoration initiatives throughout the region. Prior to moving to Stroud in January, 2013, Matt served as the Executive Director for the Pennsylvania office of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) for over a decade. He currently serves as Past President for the Penn State College of Agriculture Ag Council and on the Steering Committee for the PA in the Balance Initiative to improve PA's efforts on Chesapeake Bay restoration. Matt received his undergraduate degree in Environmental Resource Management and his Master of Engineering in Engineering Science from the Pennsylvania State University.

Bill Fink

Bill Fink is the Environmental Management Specialist for the Clemens Food Group and Country View Family Farms. Before joining CFG / CVFF, William has worked as an agricultural environmental consultant and prior to that as the Chesapeake Bay Technician at the Fulton County Conservation District. William serves on various state and nation committees related to agricultural environmental stewardship.

Bobby Hughes

Bobby Hughes is the Executive Director of the Eastern PA Coalition for Abandoned Mine Reclamation (EPCAMR) with 30 years experience in abandoned mine land reclamation, water pollution control technologies, environmental education, and capacity building in coalfield communities throughout Northeastern & Northcentral PA; Coalition builder, grant writer, and grant administrator; Coordinator of 27 State-wide Conferences on Abandoned Mine Reclamation; Author of an activity/coloring book for youth on EPCAMR's work, an e-book on our AMD Environmental Education Programs, and a Cornell University Press publication on Civic Ecology. He is a certified UAS Remote Drone Pilot and is currently working with EPCAMR Staff to advocate for renewable energy projects on mine lands related to solar including the creation of a Solar Site Suitability GIS Tool for siting potential solar projects on mine lands across PA, geothermal projects utilizing underground mine pool water, rare earth elements recovery, stream restoration to keep clean streams from entering the underground mine workings, conducting watershed assessments and water quality and flow monitoring of dozens of AMD impacted rivers and streams throughout the Northern Anthracite and Bituminous Coal Fields and reclaiming abandoned waste culm banks in partnership with the Appalachian Regional Independent Power Producers Association (ARIPPA) in coalfield communities. An Agnes Flood Baby, Bobby was born in the Wyoming Valley Coal Region as a native of the City of Wilkes-Barre in the heart of the Northern Anthracite Coal Field.

Patrick McDonnell

Patrick brings over 20 years of experience on climate, clean energy and environmental issues to his role as president and CEO of PennFuture. Prior to joining PennFuture, he spent six years as Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection, leading key initiatives like passage of the state's first carbon trading regulation, acceleration of the Commonwealth's cleanup of waterways, and a new focus on environmental justice issues. He also served as President of the Environmental Council of the States, the voice of state environmental agencies nationally. Prior to being named Secretary, Patrick served in roles at the DEP and the Public Utility Commission, heading up the state's energy office, managing the agency's budget and human resources, and overseeing the development of regulations and guidance documents. Some of his most notable accomplishments in government include development of the state's first wind farms, the Award-winning Ehrenfeld reclaimed mines project, and entry into the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI). Deeply committed to environmental justice issues, Patrick has collaborated with partners across the Commonwealth and the nation. These partnerships have resulted in brownfield cleanups, waterway restoration projects, and new opportunities for tourism and leisure in Pennsylvania towns that have been historically underserved. He is a firm

believer that environmentally focused policies will result in new jobs and opportunities for all Pennsylvanians. On weekends, Patrick can be found on an improv stage in Harrisburg, hiking one of Pennsylvania's state parks with his wife and four children, or checking out the latest Star Wars film.

VIRGINIA

Douglas Faulkner

Douglas L. Faulkner brings three decades of global leadership in energy and the environment to this Committee. As a civil servant in the Clinton Administration, he built the first federal bio-based products research and development office. He served as a senior political appointee in the George W. Bush Administration at both the U.S. Departments of Energy and Agriculture, where he focused on energy efficiency, renewable energy and rural development. He founded his sustainability advisory firm, Leatherstocking LLC, in 2009 and still serves as its President. The company helps international clean technology clients chart pathways for growth with strategic private-public partnerships. Doug sits on the Board of Directors for the Swedish-American Chamber of Commerce, Washington, DC and promotes Nordic sustainable innovation in the USA. Virginia Governor McDonnell appointed him to the Commonwealth's Offshore Wind Development Authority, as did Governor Youngkin recently. The University of Illinois awarded him a BA in Asian Studies; the Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies a MA; and, he was a Rotary Scholar and the first American enrolled at the University of Singapore. His son and he are Eagle Scouts with a shared passion for the outdoors. His wife and he call Arlington, VA, home.

Ann Jurczyk

Ann Jurczyk is the Virginia Director of Outreach and Advocacy for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF). Her responsibilities include educating and engaging citizens for CBF's Save the Bay efforts and advocating for water quality legislation in the Virginia General Assembly. Prior to joining CBF fulltime in 2010, Ann served as the organization's Clean Water Campaign Organizer, rallying citizen support for clean water legislation pending in the U.S. Congress. She also is a graduate of CBF's Volunteers as Chesapeake Stewards program and, as a volunteer, headed a successful effort to fund and implement a living shoreline project that now protects 400 feet of the James River shoreline in James City County, Va. Since joining CBF full time, she has completed many restoration projects, including designing and implementing buffers, vegetated swales, community gardens and rain gardens. Earlier, Ann spent more than twenty years as a marketing executive for an international software firm before shifting her focus toward "marketing the environment." She holds degrees in landscape horticulture and English from North Carolina State University and lives with her family in Fredericksburg.

Joe Maroon

Joe is the Executive Director of the Virginia Environmental Endowment, a position he has held since 2013. VEE is a philanthropic foundation based in Richmond that makes grants to improve the environment. Until recently, he also taught graduate courses in environmental policy and Chesapeake Bay issues at the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech. He has over 35 years of experience in Chesapeake Bay and natural resources leadership. Joe previously served as the State Agency Director of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation for eight years during which time he also served on the Bay Principals Staff Committee. He also was the first Virginia Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, and had his own environmental consulting practice. He has helped to pass or implement a number of environmental and conservation initiatives. Joe has received several awards including being named outstanding environmental leader in Virginia in 2000. In 2010, the Virginia General Assembly passed a resolution commending him for his years of service. In 2018, Joe was inducted into the National Association of Conservation Districts Hall of Fame in recognition of his career and service.

Bill Noftsinger

Born in Richmond and raised in Roanoke, Bill Noftsinger spent over 65 summers on the Chesapeake Bay and winters camping in the mountains of western Virginia. A graduate of Campbell University, Bill earned his B.S. in Geology, while also majoring in History. During his senior year at Campbell, he worked part-time for the North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources as an Environmental Engineering Tech, where he conducted water quality studies in the Raleigh area. Shortly after graduation, Bill was hired by the former Carolina Power and Light as an Environmental Scientist in their permits section. Bill pivoted and spent the next seven years working in manufacturing and sales, while also earning an MBA from the University of Richmond. Another pivot in 1981 began his investment career. He managed portfolios for the next 38 years, first at Wheat First Securities and then at Davenport & Company, LLC, both in Richmond. At Davenport Bill served on the Investment Policy Committee and a member of their Board of Directors. In 2019, Bill moved to Alpha Omega Wealth Management, an independent Registered Investment Advisor, continuing his work in research and portfolio management. Married to his college sweetheart since 1973, Bill and his wife Rosemary have raised three grown children and enjoy four grandchildren. They spend their summers on the Chesapeake Bay and the Potomac River at their home in Northumberland County. Additionally, as an Eagle Scout, Bill works with Boy Scout Troop 444 in Richmond, spending a weekend a month camping in the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Tim Rupli

Tim Rupli is Chairman, Federal Advisory and CEO, TR Rupli, Inc., leaders in federal policy consulting since 1992. Prior to that he served as Executive Secretary, 1991 Defense Base Closure & Realignment Commission ("BRAC"), as White House Liaison to the US Department of Interior, and Deputy White House Liaison to the US Department of Health and Human Services. He lives in Northern Virginia with his wife and four children, and operates wildlife conservation farms in Loudoun County, Virginia and Talbot County, Maryland.

Mary Sketch

Mary is the Director of the Virginia Soil Health Coalition through Virginia Tech and is based in Salem, Virginia. She has experience working with collaboratives and coalitions across the country at the intersection of economic and environmental wellbeing with a focus on working lands and rural communities. Prior to working with the Virginia Soil Health Coalition, she worked at the Center for Rural Strategies where she helped coordinate the Rural Assembly, a coalition of rural stakeholders across the US. She received her Master's degree in Fish and Wildlife Conservation from Virginia Tech and her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from Brown University. Through her graduate research she worked directly with agricultural producers and conservation practitioners to gain a deeper understanding of how farmers and ranchers approach conservation and land management decisions.

BeKura Shabazz- Chair, Stewardship & Engagement Subcommittee

Hampton Roads native and mother to 4 biological children plus 4. BeKura W. Shabazz has over 2 decades of dirtroots advocacy and activism in the areas of criminal injustice, policy, environmental injustice, child welfare reform, housing and economic injustice work. She previously served as State lead for federal legislation on climate change and sea level rise with the Virginia Conservation Network. Since leaving that role she has been vigorously fighting against oppressive and systemic nonprofit culture against African Americans alongside all of her other areas of interest. She is currently the Social Justice and Health Disparities committee chairwoman of the Va. Green New Deal, Chesterfield NAACP Criminal Justice committee chair, Internal Policy Committee of the Va Environmental Justice Collaborative and Board Member, an Advisory Board member of the Virginia Human Rights Network and just recently expanded her advocacy to the state of Maryland by becoming the Legal Empowerment Director of Life After Release. Ms. Shabazz is the Founder and President of First Alliance Consulting LLC, The Criminal Injustice Reform Network and Mothers Against Mandatory Minimums. She is also a certified mediator, conflict resolution specialist and provides legal advocacy services for legally underrepresented community members.

WEST VIRGINIA

David Lillard- Vice-Chair

David Lillard lives in Jefferson County, West Virginia. He is project manager for The Downstream Project, a nonprofit consulting group that provides creative and technical services to land and watershed organizations and agencies in West Virginia and throughout the Bay watershed. David's practice includes developing and implementing communications plans, creating branding and messaging strategies for public engagement around clean water policies and action plans, and managing video production and website design. His involvement in the Bay Program includes providing technical assistance to statewide groups like West Virginia Rivers Coalition, local land trusts and watershed organizations, WV DEP, and WV Conservation Agency. He is a founder of a land trust and chief executive of another, and is particularly interested in the Bay Agreements conservation goals. His favorite pastime is exploring the creeks and streams of the Potomac Highlands and the Ridge and Valley on foot or in the water.