



PUBLIC FEEDBACK ON THE DRAFT REVISED CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT

STAKEHOLDERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE | SEPTEMBER 18, 2025



Public feedback period ran from July 1—September 1.



Received 1,465 unique comments.



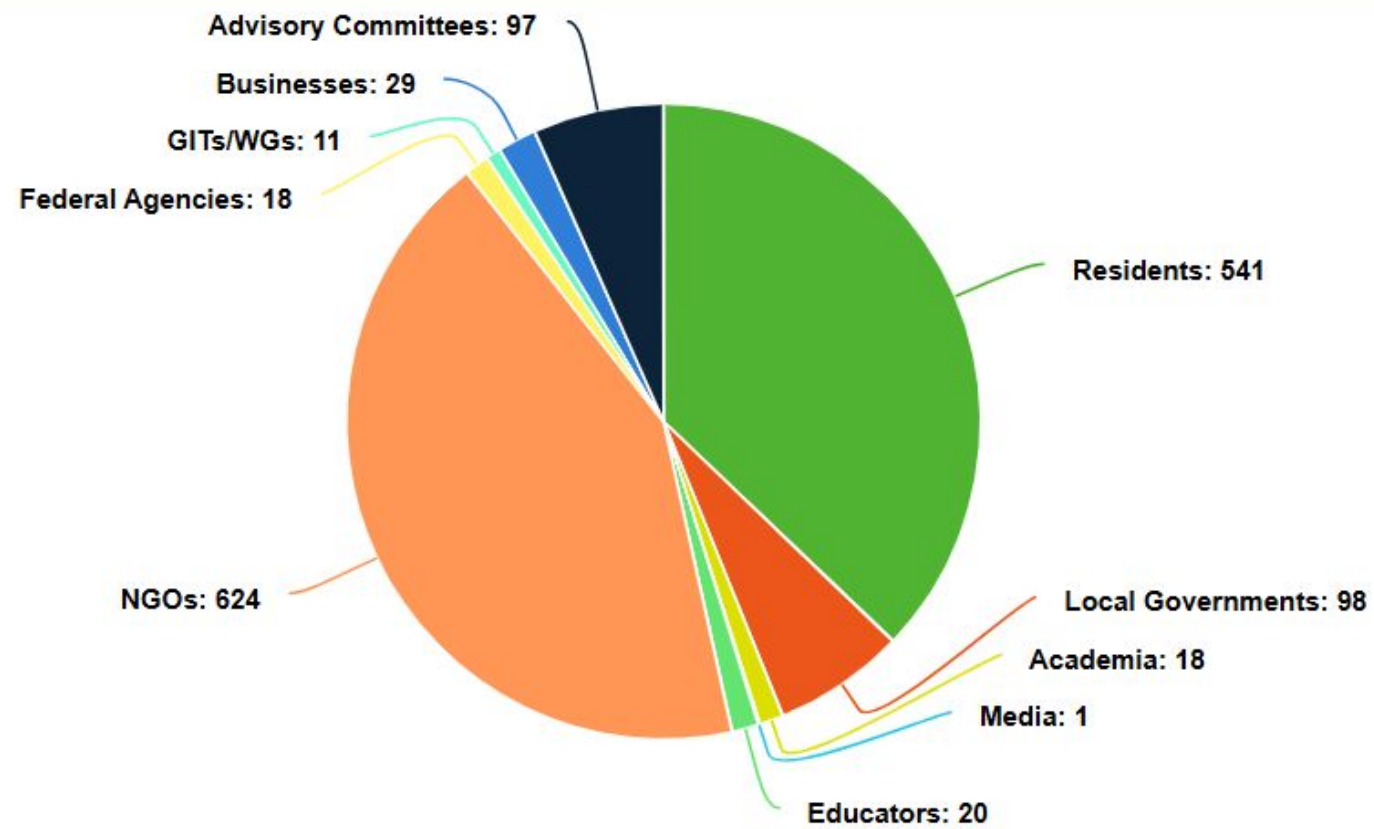
381 individual feedback emails.



Two major action alerts resulting in:

1,114 emails from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation
1,047 emails from Environment America

FEEDBACK OVERVIEW



COMMENTER BREAKDOWN

623 comments from NGOs

545 comments from watershed residents

98 comments from 12 local governments units

97 comments from 4 advisory committees

29 comments from 4 private businesses

20 comments from K-12 educators

18 comments from 2 colleges/universities

18 comments from 1 federal agency

11 comments from 1 Goal Implementation Team and 1 Workgroup

1 comment from media

THRIVING HABITATS AND WILDLIFE GOAL

- Oysters – 56 comments
 - Fish Habitat – 53 comments
 - Wetlands – 53 comments
 - Stream Health – 32 comments
 - SAV – 23 comments
 - Blue Crab Sustainability – 15 comments
 - Fish Passage – 9 comments
 - Brook Trout – 7 comments
- Concern that targets are lower than in the previous Agreement for several outcomes.
 - Requests for more details that will ultimately be included in the Management Strategies.
 - Multiple calls to consider adding outcome/target/other reference to invasive species, primarily blue catfish.
 - Strong support for the Brook Trout and Fish Passage outcomes.

CLEAN WATER GOAL

- Would like to see the Bay TMDL, Phase III WIPs and even MS4s better reflected throughout the Agreement.
- Outcomes/targets need to be written in plain language.
- Toxics Contaminants Mitigation Outcome needs more actionable targets.
- More reference to agriculture and non-point sources are needed throughout the Agreement.
- More monitoring for water quality, including for shallow waters, and for other parameters like toxins
- Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment – 111 comments
- Water Quality Standards Attainment & Monitoring – 42 comments
- Toxic Contaminants Mitigation – 38 comments

HEALTHY LANDSCAPES GOAL

- Concern that targets are lower than those reflected in the previous Agreement.
- Some terms are unclear, e.g., community trees, community greenspace.
- Better articulate the role of local governments in this work.
- Concern that language lacks specificity, e.g., changing environmental conditions.
- Strong support for new Protected Lands targets but confusion over lack of metrics
- Protected Lands = 102 comments
- Healthy Forests and Trees = 35 comments
- Land Use Decision Support = 34 comments
- Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions = 29 comments



ENGAGED COMMUNITIES GOAL

- Support for Workforce outcome but request for concrete metrics and baselines.
 - Revise outcomes/targets to be more plain language, e.g., “comprehensive and systemic approach.”
 - Engage with parochial, private and other types of K-12 schools beyond public.
 - Include a measurable target for the Stewardship Outcome.
 - Concern that Public Access target is too low.
 - Build in a 10-minute walkability analysis to determine new public access sites.
 - Consider revising the Local Leadership target to be more targeted and measurable.
- Student Experiences/School District Planning = 52 comments
 - Public Access = 31 comments
 - Stewardship = 24 comments
 - Local Leadership = 19 comments

OVERARCHING CONCERNS FOR MANAGEMENT BOARD DISCUSSION

Need for a consistent timeframe across all outcomes and targets.

Call for removing any placeholders that do not have a numeric target.

Stronger references to agriculture needed throughout the Agreement.

Climate concerns are lacking when they should be reflected throughout every part of the Agreement.

Include reference to the Bay TMDL in the Agreement.

Need for clear, understandable and public-friendly language.

Reflect accountability.

We envision a Chesapeake Bay region where clean waters flow freely, wildlife thrives, and farms, forests and fisheries stay healthy and productive. It is a place where people from all walks of life feel connected to the land, to the Bay and local waterways, to their communities and to the rich cultural heritage that makes this watershed unique. Together, we are building a future that is environmentally and economically sustainable, resilient and full of possibility—where everyone can conserve and enjoy the natural beauty of the Bay, and the lands and waters that surround it, today and for generations to come.

REFRAME VISION



Outcome leads and Review Team members continue to meet to refine recommendations.



During the week of September 15, small review teams will meet to begin making suggested red-lined revisions to the revised Watershed Agreement.



Final recommendations for Agreement revisions due to Rachel Felver from outcome leads and Review Team members by Friday, September 19.



Additional mark-ups added to the Agreement and send out to the Review Team for fatal flaw review.



Red-lined version uploaded to chesapeakebay.net on September 23.



Recommendations in red-lined version to be discussed and approved to move forward at September retreat.



Final consensus on revised Watershed Agreement to occur at October Management Board meeting.

WHAT'S NEXT?



QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

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