



Chesapeake Bay Program

Science. Restoration. Partnership.

Agriculture Advisory Committee (AAC) November Quarterly Meeting

November 5, 2025

11:00 am – 2:00 pm

[Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.](#)

Purpose: AAC members discussed key points for annual recommendations to the Chesapeake Executive Council. They also discussed the Gettysburg Energy and Nutrient Recovery Facility and potential support for the project.

Minutes

I. Call to Order, Approval of Minutes, Member Updates and Public Comments

Lead: Bill Fink, AAC Chair

Decisions:

1. Barb Glenn made a motion to approve minutes from the August 28 Meeting. Motion carried, minutes approved.

Actions:

1. None

Discussion Notes:

- Member Updates
 - Maryland: Barb Glenn and Amanda Cather met with MDA leadership regarding new programs and state-specific challenges.
 - Representation: Bill Fink represented the AAC at the Management Board (Bay Agreement review) and the October PSC meeting. He noted that "Agriculture" is now prominently featured in the new agreement.
 - Engagement: Bob Waring updated the AgWG on AAC activities and expressed interest in the upcoming NFWF Ag Networking Forum.
- Public Comment Period
 - James Martin (VA DCR): Introduced Virginia's conservation cost-share programs, noting they represent the largest program in the nation with \$220M in funds.
 - Pat Thompson: Recommended forming a subcommittee to develop a letter of recommendation to ensure key ideas are captured.

II. AAC Recommendations to the Executive Council

Lead: Bill Fink, Chair

- a. The committee discussed core themes for upcoming Executive Council (EC) comments and general advocacy.

Decisions [required]:

1. None

Actions [required]:

1. Jen Nelson/Bill Fink will draft recommendations for the EC based on discussion and distribute to AAC members for their review.

Discussion Notes:

- The Farmer's Role: Emphasize that farmers are "frontline environmental stewards" and partners, not opponents.
- Farm Viability: Profitability is a prerequisite for meeting Best Management Practice (BMP) goals. The committee noted that cash flow and initial investment costs often hinder conservation efforts for both established and young farmers.
- Innovation & Technology: * Need for "Proactive Communication" regarding successes.
- Support for precision ag, soil health, manure treatment, and enhanced efficiency fertilizers.
- Integration of state-specific innovative programs (e.g., MD Soil Health) into the Bay Program.
- Data & Policy: Call for public-private partnerships to leverage data while ensuring privacy and liability protection.
- Focus on "Pay for Performance" and credit/trading markets.
- Future Generations: Emphasis on agricultural literacy and developing a career pipeline to prevent agricultural land from being lost to development.

III. Gettysburg Energy and Nutrient Recovery Facility/ Integrated Environmental Management System (GENRF/IEMS Project)

Lead: Bill Fink, Chair

- a. The committee reviewed the "Sandbox Process" regarding manure treatment technologies and modeling.

Decisions:

1. None

Actions:

1. AAC members will research further, with Amanda Barber seeking more information from the Ag Workgroup.

Discussion Notes:

- The Barrier: While the BMP is approved, the current model does not fully recognize the benefits in a way that allows investors to justify support through Pay-for-Performance programs.
- Discussion: Lee McDonnell noted a disconnect regarding assumptions of manure application. Doug Wolfgang suggested the sandbox process should trace the full life cycle of nutrients.
- Conclusion: The committee expressed support for the innovation of the sandbox approach (aligned with the CESR report) but hesitated to issue a formal letter of support immediately.

IV. Wrap-Up

Lead: Bill Fink, Jen Nelson

V. Adjourn- 1:56 pm (Motion: Bill Fink, 1st, Bob Waring, 2nd)

Next Meeting: TBD following a scheduling poll of members

Attendees:

- AAC Members: Will Carlisle, Amanda Cather, Barb Glenn, Amanda Barber, Bill Fink, Bob Waring, Greg Mitchell, Jerry Ours
- Additional Attendees: James Martin, Pat Thompson, Doug Wolfgang, Lee McDonnell, Eric Hughes, Alisha Mulkey, Jen Nelson