

Agricultural Advisory Committee Directive

In July 2023, state agricultural secretaries from across the Chesapeake Bay watershed—Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia—formally requested the Chesapeake Bay Program create an Agricultural Advisory Committee. At the 2023 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting, members requested that the Principals’ Staff Committee consider the idea and report back at the 2024 Chesapeake Executive Council meeting.

Agricultural Advisory Committee Action Team

The Principals’ Staff Committee formed an Agricultural Advisory Committee Action Team in January 2024 to conduct research in developing recommendations prior to creating the advisory committee. The Action Team was chaired by the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture and included representatives from each of the watershed states, District of Columbia, the tri-state legislative Chesapeake Bay Commission, other Chesapeake Bay Program advisory committees and the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government.

In June 2024, the Agricultural Advisory Committee Action Team presented their findings on the proposed advisory committee to the Principals’ Staff Committee. The Action Team recommended moving forward with the creation of the Agricultural Advisory Committee, developed [by-laws](#) to govern the new advisory committee and asked that state agricultural secretaries, along with the Director of the District of Columbia Department of Energy and Environment, request a meeting with the Environmental Protection Agency Mid-Atlantic Regional Administrator to discuss funding for this new advisory committee.

Chesapeake Bay Program Advisory Committees

The Chesapeake Bay Program currently has three advisory committees that represent the interests of local governments, scientists and stakeholders across the Chesapeake Bay region. The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee and Stakeholders Advisory Committee (formerly Citizens) were formed as part of the [Chesapeake Bay Agreement of 1983](#). The Local Government Advisory Committee was created with the [1987 Chesapeake Bay Agreement](#).

Chesapeake Bay Program advisory committees provide independent perspectives from critical stakeholder groups across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Their role strengthens the natural and social science basis for the protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Why Agriculture?

Pollution resulting from the agricultural sector has historically provided the greatest amount of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay. Farmers throughout the watershed have demonstrated their commitment to conservation stewardship by adopting best management practices to reduce the level of nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment flowing off their land and into local waterways. However, without substantial efforts made by the agricultural community, attainment of water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay will not be met.

Agricultural Advisory Committee Directive

The Agricultural Advisory Committee Directive establishes an Agricultural Advisory Committee that will consist of farmers, including urban farmers, and other agricultural industry stakeholders, who will use their knowledge of farming operations and best management practices to directly advise the Chesapeake Bay Program on how agriculture can be part of the solution for a healthier Chesapeake Bay and watershed.

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