

## **Agriculture Workgroup (AgWG) Governance**

### **Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership**

**March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018**

**(Revised December 8, 2021; November 7, 2024)**

#### **AgWG Recommended Governance: Member Consensus\* (up to 21 members possible)**

- Signatory Members from each Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Agreement signatory [up to 9 signatory members (one each) with an alternate identified]
  - Chesapeake Bay Commission (CBC)
  - Delaware
  - District of Columbia
  - Maryland
  - New York
  - Pennsylvania
  - Virginia
  - West Virginia
  - US EPA
  
- At-large Member Categories\*\* [up to 12 members (one or more each) with option to identify alternates]
  - Academic (e.g. regional colleges and land grant institutions)
  - Agri-Business and Industry (e.g. regional commodity, fruits and nuts, livestock and poultry, and nursery representatives or associations)
  - Conservation Districts (e.g. regional conservation districts or associations)
  - Conservation/Environmental NGO's (e.g. regional agricultural and conservation NGO's)
  - USDA (e.g. ARS, NRCS)

\*Decision-making for the AgWG will primarily be accomplished by consensus-based (e.g. all parties can live with the decision) discussion and voice polling of the full workgroup participants attending an official partnership-advertised meeting or conference call. If full participant consensus cannot be achieved after due diligence to resolve the non-consensus opinion(s), the question will be elevated to the recognized AgWG Governance Membership. If, after substantial negotiations, consensus still cannot be reached, the Governance Members will be electronically polled, and the non-consensus decision will be elevated to the next decision-making body (WQGIT) along with a description of the positions of the polled members.

\*\*Criteria for At-Large Membership: In an effort to empower non-signatory partners in the decision-making process, priority for at-large membership will be reserved for non-governmental organizations, quasi-governmental organizations, federal agencies, academic institutions, and

other local practitioners that have a role in agricultural water quality improvements. Nominations will be accepted from all AgWG members, advisors, and interested parties, and the selection of the at-large membership will be determined by the signatory and existing (mid-term) at-large AgWG members with consideration to their level of commitment, skills and perspectives (e.g., geographic diversity and expertise).

### **AgWG Governance Membership Selection**

Signatory Members: A request for signatory governance representation will occur when the workgroup identifies that there is a vacant position from any of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Agreement signatories. The signatory will be asked to provide a new nominee for the primary and/or alternative governance position, along with an associated brief bio, C.V. or resume.

At-Large Members: A request for at-large governance representatives will occur when the workgroup identifies that there is a need for filling vacant primary and/or alternative position(s). Nominations will be accepted from the full partnership and will be reviewed and selected by the signatory and existing (mid-term) at-large members. When multiple nominees are identified for vacant position(s), the nominee(s) receiving the strongest signatory and existing (mid-term) at-large endorsement will be selected to fill the position(s). The selected at-large members are encouraged to provide an alternate name along with an associated brief bio, CV, or resume that can serve as a proxy in the absence of the selected at-large member.

### **AgWG Leadership Selection**

Chair and Vice-Chair: The Chair and Vice-Chair are not required to be designated signatory or at-large members but can be nominated from across all interested parties of the Agriculture Workgroup and the broader Chesapeake Bay Partnership. The Chair's primary responsibility is to facilitate and moderate monthly meetings of the AgWG, currently four (quarterly) two-day face-to-face meetings that rotate between the states and monthly, two-hour remote (web and phone) based conference calls, with other duties assigned as necessary. As facilitators, Chair and Vice-Chair positions are expected to maintain an un-biased, neutral role within the AgWG, with a focus on consensus-building via active outreach among the entire cross-section of AgWG participants. The Vice-chair supports the role of Chair and leads in the Chair's absence. The Vice-Chair position would typically be intended to step into the Chair role following the Chair's tenure (2 years), should professional demands allow. Chair positions fill the role of facilitators and should refrain from having a voice in the decision-making process. Should a current governance member transition into the Chair or Vice-Chair role, someone should be appointed to fill the vacancy created by the transition.

### **AgWG Governance Member Length-of-Term and Participation**

Signatory Members: Signatory governance representatives will serve until replaced by their associated signatory body.

At-large Members: At-large governance representatives will serve in their position(s) for a maximum of two-years. At the end of their term, the representative(s) may be re-nominated for consideration in refilling the vacant at-large position(s). In order to prevent the turn-over of all twelve at-large positions with their alternates within one year, the position terms are staggered so that only one-half of the positions may be eligible for reconsideration annually.

Persistent non-participation in workgroup activities hinders the goals and partnership approach of the Chesapeake Bay Program and its workgroups. In the event that it is determined that neither a governance member nor his/her selected alternate is regularly participating in Workgroup meetings, the Workgroup may seek to replace said member(s). In the case of a signatory member, it would be the responsibility of the specific jurisdiction to find another individual(s) to fulfill the signatory membership duties. In the case of an at-large member, the Workgroup Coordinator is tasked with communicating with the at-large member to determine his/her willingness re-commit to the responsibilities of the Workgroup. Should it be determined that either the at-large member (or the assigned alternate) will be unable to participate in regular Workgroup activities, the at-large member will be asked to formally resign from the governance membership role. The Workgroup will be notified of the pending vacancy. Should the vacancy occur more than six months prior to the next normal at-large election cycle, the Workgroup will determine by consensus if seeking new nominations to fill the vacancy is warranted.

### **AgWG Leadership Length-of-Term**

Chair and Vice Chair: The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve in their positions for a maximum of two-years. At the end of the Chair's term, the Vice-Chair may step into the Chair's role for the following two-year term, should professional demands allow. The Workgroup would then seek nominations for a new Vice-Chair. Should both positions be vacated simultaneously, nominations will be sought for both positions. In order to maintain the vibrancy and robustness of the Workgroup, maintaining the same person in the Chair position for consecutive terms is strongly discouraged.

### **Selection Process**

At-large Members: Signatory and existing (mid-term) at-large members will be provided a list of nominated candidates for the at-large vacancies, along with associated candidate bio, C.V., or resume. Each signatory and existing (mid-term) at-large member will receive one ballot (for a total of up to 15 ballots- each jurisdiction, EPA, CBC, and 6 at-large) listing all candidates by email. These governance members will be asked to rank the candidates in sequential order by preference on the ballot and return the ballot to the AgWG coordinator and staffer for tallying. These rankings will be used as values to create an average score for each candidate across the governance membership. The candidates who receive the lowest average (therefore highest ranking) scores will be chosen to fill the at-large vacancies. The selected candidates will be announced at the forthcoming Workgroup meeting.

Chair and Vice-Chair: AgWG participants will be provided a list of nominated candidates for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions, along with associated candidate bio, CV, or resume. All

candidates will attend the AgWG meeting designated for elections to present their qualifications, interest, and commitment-level to the Workgroup. Following Chair candidate presentations, AgWG participants that are present in-person or over-the-phone will receive one ballot (paper or on-line, as appropriate) listing all Chair candidates. After sufficient time is provided for voting, the Workgroup coordinator and staffer will tally the votes and pronounce the candidate with the most votes as the next Chair of the AgWG. In the event of a tie-vote in selection of the Chair, the selection between the two tied candidates will be decided by anonymous ballot among the signatory membership. Should the signatory vote also result in a tie, the out-going Workgroup Chair will serve as the tie-breaking vote. Runners-up for the Chair position may request to be added to the pool of candidates for Vice-Chair. Any remaining candidates for Vice-Chair that have not yet spoken will present themselves to the Workgroup and voting will proceed for Vice Chair, as described above.