



**Chesapeake Bay Program**  
*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# Chesapeake Bay Program Updates: Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Meeting

December 11, 2025

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# **December 2 EC Meeting: Major Actions**

1. Approved the amended Watershed Agreement
  2. Approved the recommendations to streamline CBP structure and governance processes
  3. Approved and issued the Charge for Tribal Partnership
  4. Elected new EC Chair for 2026
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# **1. Watershed Agreement**



# CB Watershed Agreement: 2024 Executive Council Charge



Chesapeake Executive Council  
*Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee:*  
*Charting a Course Beyond 2025*

*Whereas* this is the final meeting of the Chesapeake Executive Council before 2025, which is the final year that we collectively set for achieving several of the key outcomes under the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#); We, the Chesapeake Executive Council:

- Celebrate the progress made by the partnership toward meeting the goals and outcomes of the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) while acknowledging the work remaining to fully achieve our shared vision;
- Recognize that the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed are dynamic, and our work must be responsive to long-established issues, emerging issues (e.g., climate change) and new scientific understandings that have impacted the level of effort needed to meet the partnership's collective restoration and conservation priorities;
- Recognize that the [Clean Water Act](#) established the Chesapeake Bay Program to improve water quality and living resources in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for all communities;
- Recognize that the signatories of the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#) share a vision of a healthy and resilient Bay and watershed for the collective benefit of all communities and people, including the Tribes of the region, while also recognizing that each jurisdiction has unique challenges, resources, opportunities and goals that support their individual participation and success of the full partnership;
- Recognize that achieving both our individual and collective goals can only, and best be realized, by remaining grounded in evolving science that is inclusive of all people, especially disadvantaged communities. By centering these viewpoints together, we will be stronger as a partnership; and
- Commend the Principals' Staff Committee, Chesapeake Bay Program partners and countless interested and impacted parties in meeting the ["Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond" Charge](#) set forth by this Executive Council in 2022.

*Therefore*, let it be resolved that we, the Chesapeake Executive Council, in recognition of the consensus-based work of the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee, guided by the findings of their ["A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Beyond 2025"](#) report and our continued commitment to meet the goals of the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), hereby direct the Principals' Staff Committee to complete the following by December 31, 2025:

1. Revisions to the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), not a new Agreement. Revisions to outcomes should be executed pursuant to the Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program. While not all outcomes will need revision, some reviews will likely result in consolidating, reducing, updating, removing, replacing, or adding new outcomes.

*2024 Charge: Revisions to the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, not a new Agreement. Revisions to outcomes should be executed pursuant to the Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program.*

# Accomplishing the 2024 EC Charge



Members directed the Bay Program's Principals' Staff Committee to take the following actions by the end of 2025:



Revise the existing *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.



Elevate conservation as a key pillar of the partnership.



Address both water quality and living resources (e.g., habitat, wildlife).



Place a greater emphasis in engaging all communities of the watershed.



Ensure goals and outcomes are measurable, time-bound and sufficient to complete the outcome as quickly as possible.



Ground revisions in the most current scientific understandings and issues.



# Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

- Amendments to 2014 agreement
  - Goals: 10→4
  - Outcomes: 31→21
- Time-horizon:
  - 2040 (with a 2033 midpoint check-in)
  - 6-year implementation periods with more frequent updates to the public



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# **Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement – Next Steps**

- Within 18 months, develop Management Strategies
    - Management Strategy template under discussion
    - Timeline for finalization of template – TBD
    - Leads for Management Strategy development – TBD
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## **2. Governance & Structure**





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## **Governance and Structure: 2024 Executive Council Charge**

*A simplified and streamlined structure and process for the partnership that supports all partners as they work toward achieving their commitments in an effective, efficient, and inclusive manner. It is the expectation of the Chesapeake Executive Council that the revised partnership structure and processes will be more inclusive of all communities and more manageable for partnership staff.*

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# **Governance and Structure: EC Recommendations**

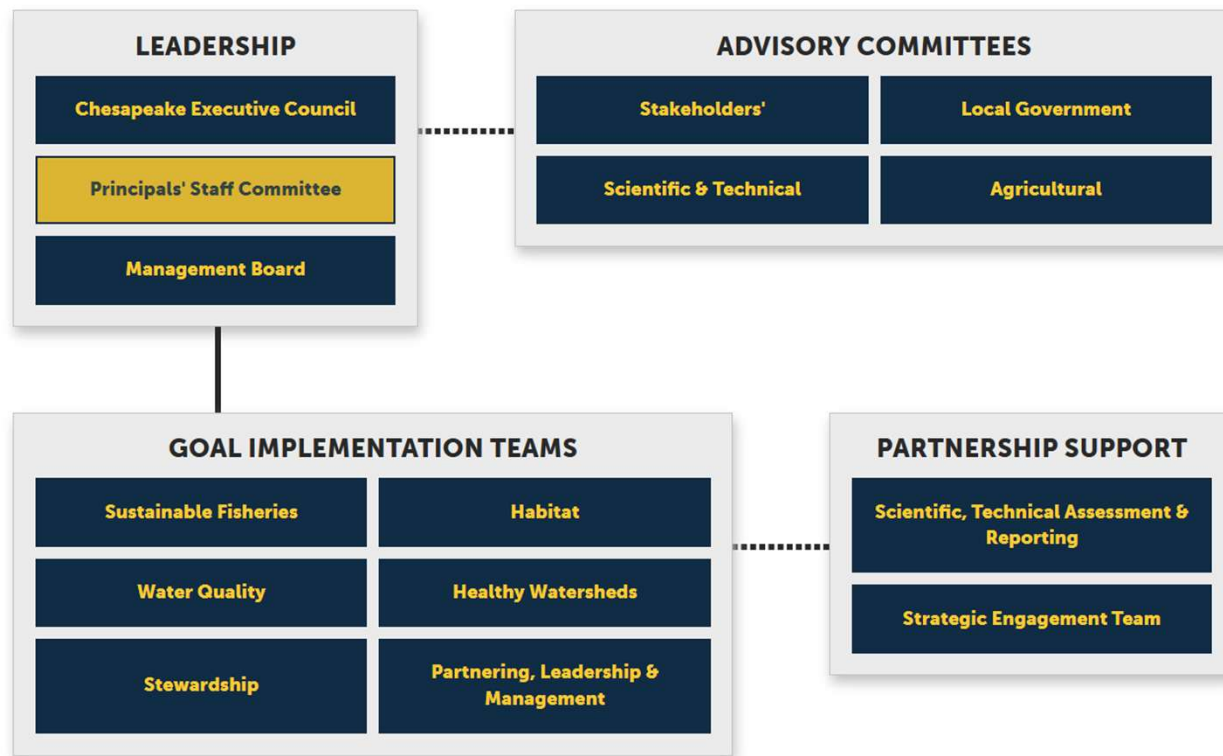
## Governance

- Clarify decision-making authority across all levels
- Strengthen federal coordination
- Re-evaluate consensus-based decision-making
- Implement updates to roles and responsibilities

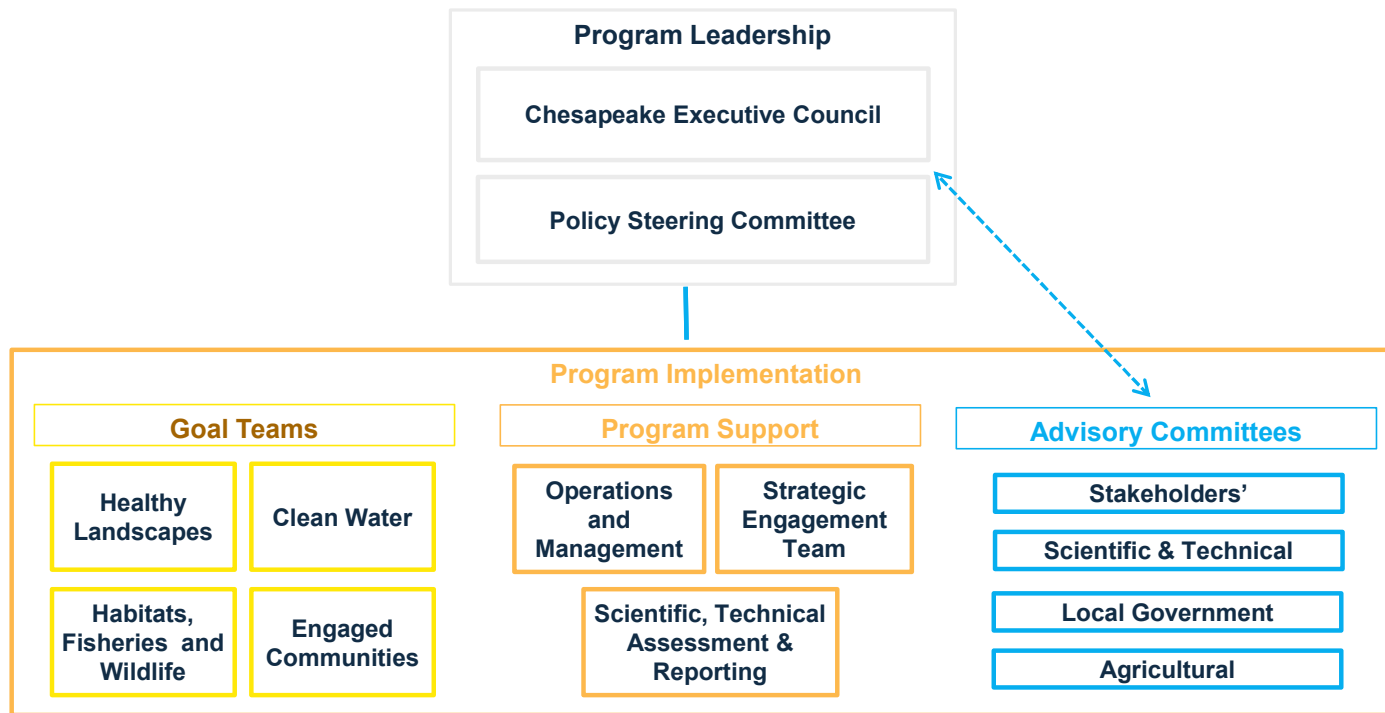
## Structure

- Eliminate Management Board (but not until July 1, 2026)
  - Program Leadership – EC and Policy Steering Committee
  - Program Implementation – coordination across Goal Teams, Program Support and Advisory Committees
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# CBP Structure: Previous



# CBP Structure: New



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## **Governance and Structure – Next Steps**

1. Begin implementing new Goal Team structure on December 3, 2025
  2. Management Board signatory partners, co-led by EPA CBPO and PA, convenes to update CBP Governance Framework document in line with new structure
  3. PSC finalizes new governance and structure by July 1, 2026
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## **3. EC Charge on Tribal Partnership**

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# History - Tribal Partnership

- January 2025: Seven federally recognized tribes in the watershed (all in VA) requested formal partnership through the Indigenous Conservation Council (ICC), support for funding Indigenous Guardians programs, and the establishment of an Indigenous Advisory Committee
  - October 2025: ICC requests (modified from Jan declaration)
    - Involvement in Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee to incorporate Indigenous science
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# EC Charge: Tribal Partnership

- EC charge directing PSC to work with federally recognized tribes to develop recommendations to include the tribes in the partnership
  - PSC must evaluate partner responsibilities and expectations, pathways for designating and identifying partner representatives, and formal channels for partnership
  - PSC must complete these recommendations by July 1, 2026
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## **4. Elect New EC Chair**

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## **December 2 EC Meeting: Elect New Chair**

- The EC elects a new chair at every annual meeting during the private session.
  - This year's chair (for 2026) is Governor Shapiro.
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# 2026 Partnership Priorities

- Transition role of EC Chair to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
  - Develop Management Strategies
  - Continue Phase 7 model development
  - Development and implementation of 2026-2027 water quality milestones
  - What we've committed to do by July 1, 2026:
    - Fulfill Charge on Tribal Partnership
    - Finalize structure and governance recommendations
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**Thank you! Questions?**

