



Chesapeake Bay Program  
*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# **Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan: Recommendation to Extend Phased Implementation**

September 21, 2026

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# Background - CWIP

- The CBP partnership estimates that, after fully implementing the Bay TMDL and the jurisdictions' Phase III WIPs, an additional reduction of approximately 6 million pounds of nitrogen and 0.26 million pounds of phosphorus will be needed to mitigate the water quality impacts of Conowingo Reservoir infill
- The Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (CWIP) Steering Committee, in collaboration with EPA support, developed and finalized a CWIP that targeted BMP implementation in the most effective areas within the Susquehanna Basin
- In July 2022, the PSC reached consensus that the Susquehanna Basin jurisdictions of PA, NY, and MD could address the Conowingo nutrient loads through the actions outlined in the CWIP using a phased approach that extends beyond 2025

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# Background – EPA Expectations

- In July 2023, EPA issued its expectations on the CWIP phased approach based on feedback from MDE, PADEP, and NYSDEC
- Through FY 2025, EPA committed to provide technical, contractual, and programmatic assistance to the CWIP Steering Committee
- The CWIP Steering Committee committed to at least 25 percent of the necessary nitrogen reductions and 25 percent of the necessary phosphorus reductions will be **achieved by December 31, 2025**
- To accomplish the reduction targets, the CWIP committed to:
  - Identifying specific funding, financing, cost-share, technical assistance, voluntary, incentive, policy, programmatic, legislative, and regulatory actions needed
  - Providing detailed and more systematic documentation of planned changes to existing programmatic capacity to implement the BMPs

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# EPA Responsibilities

- Evaluate the CWIP and Conowingo two-year milestones
- Evaluate the progress towards meeting the numeric elements on an annual basis
- Conduct a numeric and programmatic assessment in 2026 of the CWIP Phase I implementation to determine whether sufficient programmatic and numeric progress has been made in meeting 25 percent of the CWIP nutrient targets and how to proceed going forward
- Provide an assessment of the final 2026-2027 commitments to maintain and accelerate progress over the next two years
- ***Based on this assessment of progress, EPA must provide recommendations to the CBP partnership on a path forward for the Conowingo WIP in 2026***

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# EPA Recommendation

- A continued phased approach is most appropriate considering the following progress:
  - CWIP's strong collaborative structure that has facilitated innovation and communication
  - Planned numeric BMP commitments for 2026–2027 and beyond as evidenced by pay for performance contracts in the Conowingo Reductions Summary
  - Promising advancements in implementation strategies, including strengthened engagement with agricultural producers
- Reevaluate progress in 2028 and provide a revised recommendation to the PSC based on additional years of implementation and programmatic development.