



AAC | Agricultural Advisory Committee

December 18, 2025

Dear Chesapeake Executive Council Members,

As chairs of the four Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) Advisory Committees, serving as your appointed advisors to the Bay Program partnership, we offer our congratulations on the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement!* We applaud your leadership, and that of your colleagues on the Chesapeake Executive Council, during this critical time for Chesapeake Bay watershed recovery. The *Watershed Agreement* sets a pathway for the next 15 years and we are honored to contribute toward its success.

We also want to offer our gratitude for the opportunity to share our committees' annual recommendations with you during the Chesapeake Executive Council meeting earlier this month. The Governors of the six watershed states and the Mayor of Washington, DC, appoint members of the Bay Program's Advisory Committees, resulting in a watershed-wide composition of competent and committed individuals. As such, we collectively serve two complementary roles for the CBP partnership: First, we provide timely, relevant input to the CBP, as representatives of your Administration's constituency, bringing expert advice and "boots-on-the-ground" insights. Each year, the volunteers of the Advisory Committees leverage an estimated 7,000 hours to help inform your Chesapeake Bay watershed policy decisions.

Secondly, the *Watershed Agreement* is a collection of strategic priorities for federal and state commitments that also depends on voluntary actions from farmers, local governments, and residents. Your Advisory Committees help to foster effective policy implementation by building understanding and engagement with stakeholder groups. Our members serve as ambassadors to their networks by expanding CBP's reach to pivotal partners, including farmers, local governments, citizens, and scientists, enabling two-way communication between the CBP and key watershed stakeholders who contribute toward, and are impacted by, conservation and restoration decisions.

As reflected in the Congressional authorizing legislation, the thought leaders that created the Chesapeake Bay Program in 1983 understood that the innovative program should be enhanced beyond the state and federal partners with public participation and collaboration with local authorities. The Advisory Committees are an essential and cost-effective element in meeting this requirement. Your predecessors created the Advisory Committees to address the need of stronger connections to critical constituents, including most recently the Agricultural community. Throughout the years, the Advisory Committees have adapted along with the Bay Program to be responsive to enhanced

scientific understanding, emerging challenges, strategic communications, and collaborative approaches. Additionally,

- The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee's (STAC) activities are in direct alignment with the Executive Order on Restoring Gold Standard Science.
- The Stakeholders' Advisory Committee brings actionable recommendations for increased transparency, accountability, and accelerated progress.
- The Local Government Advisory Committee's (LGAC) activities ensure that the Bay Program is cooperating with local authorities, whose decisions directly affect state and federal efforts to meet the goals and outcomes of the revised *Watershed Agreement*.
- The Agricultural Advisory Committee recommendations align with USDA's "Farmers First" Policy Agenda.

We are proud of the Chesapeake Bay Program's accomplishments. Federal, state, and local investments have led to tangible results in the Chesapeake Bay and in local watershed communities. Continued engagement with your Advisory Committees will bolster the return on those investments. Strategic efforts to align the *Watershed Agreement* goals with financial resources and targeted implementation enable continued progress toward our common vision of "building a future that is environmentally and economically sustainable, resilient and full of possibility—where everyone can enjoy and help conserve the natural beauty of the Bay, and the lands and waters that surround it, today and for generations to come."

We look forward to working with you in the coming years. As Advisory Committee chairs, we welcome the Chesapeake Executive Council's direction via special assignments that would clarify the topic areas or types of advice that would help advance our shared priorities. Your Advisory Committees stand ready to support all of the partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program, as we collectively work to achieve the goals of the *Watershed Agreement*.

Respectfully,



Abel Olivo
Stakeholder's Advisory Committee



Dr. Bill Dennison
Scientific & Technical Advisory Committee



Bill Fink
Agricultural Advisory Committee



Commissioner Marty Qually
Local Government Advisory Committee

cc: Dan Coogan, Chesapeake Bay Program Director
cc: Principals' Staff Committee Members