Local Government Advisory Committee
Quarterly Meeting

June 4 - 5 2026

Visit the meeting webpage for meeting materials and additional information.

Purpose & Meeting Objectives:

- Explore the connection between the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), water quality modeling and water quality monitoring
- Explore the difference between water quality modeling and water quality monitoring and how they can work together
- Discuss the impact of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, water quality modeling and water quality monitoring on local governments

Actions & Decisions

Thursday June 4, 2026

I. Call to Order

Councilmember Hastings welcomed LGAC members and reviewed the meeting objectives.

Lead: Councilmember Josh Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
Materials: Meeting Agenda

II. Presentation: Briefing on the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL)

An overview of the history of the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, including legal and regulatory drivers that have led to robust water quality monitoring and modeling throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Lead: Lara Fowler, Penn State (lbf10@psu.edu)
Materials: Presentation
Discussion Notes:

- The TMDL sets numeric limits for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reductions across the watershed.
  - The TMDL's legal focus is on ensuring pollution-control measures are in place, not guaranteeing restoration outcomes by a specific date.
  - The TMDL was upheld in federal court as a lawful partnership between EPA and the states.
- EPA's monitoring and modeling framework integrates land use, BMPs, agriculture, wastewater, air deposition, and climate data to evaluate progress.
  - Repeated assessments have shown progress, but also persistent gaps in nutrient reduction and implementation.
- The updated 2040 framework seeks to: Streamline Bay Program goals and outcomes; Integrate climate resilience and changing environmental conditions; Strengthen local engagement and implementation; and Maximize economic and community benefits alongside restoration outcomes.
- L. Fowler argued that successful restoration will depend on connecting Bay goals to local priorities, economies, and community needs rather than treating restoration as a standalone environmental objective.

III. Presentation: Briefing on Chesapeake Bay Programs Suite of Models

An overview of the Chesapeake Bay Program's suite of models including the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST). CAST is an environmental planning tool for restoring local water quality and the Chesapeake Bay.

Lead: Lee McDonnell, Chesapeake Bay Program (mcdonnell.lee@epa.gov)
Materials: Presentation
Discussion Notes:

- The Chesapeake Bay model suite is used to: Estimate nutrient and sediment loads reaching the Bay, evaluate impacts on water quality and dissolved oxygen, and set restoration targets and track progress.
- A major near-term priority is completing the Phase 7 watershed model suite, expected to be available for partnership use in 2028.
- Updated planning targets will be developed using improved science and modeling tools. New watershed implementation plans will be developed after targets are established, creating a roadmap to achieve restoration objectives by 2040.
- M. Cole shared the Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC)'s Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response (CESR) report-in-brief.
- L. Cattell Noll highlighted the new Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Sediment (REMPS) Outcome in the revised *Watershed Agreement* and summarized three key commitments:
    - Continue accelerating implementation of existing planning targets.
    - Update the watershed model and establish revised planning targets by 2030.
    - Demonstrate continued net reductions in nutrient and sediment pollution.

IV. Break

V. Plenary Discussion with LGAC members

Facilitator: Councilmember Josh Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
Materials: None
Discussion Notes:

- LGAC members discussed that both presentations were highly valuable, particularly L. Fowler's presentation. Members appreciated the historical context, connections to current challenges, and clear explanations of technical concepts.
- LGAC members discussed how local governments play a critical role in water quality improvements but require practical tools and implementation strategies as well local innovation and community-driven solutions.
- LGAC members discussed how today's water quality challenges are very different from those faced when the Chesapeake Bay Program began.
- LGAC members discussed how local governments may respond more strongly when water quality is framed as an economic and community development issue rather than solely an environmental issue.
- LGAC members expressed concern that modeling updates lag behind rapidly changing environmental conditions.

VI. Presentation: Water Quality Monitoring in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed
An overview of the Chesapeake Bay Program's tidal and non-tidal water quality monitoring throughout the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

Lead: Ken Hyer, US Geological Survey (kenhyer@usgs.gov) and Rebecca Murphy, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science (rmurphy@chesapeakebay.net)
Materials: Presentation on non-tidal monitoring, Presentation on tidal monitoring
Discussion Notes:

- Monitoring data show substantial long-term improvements in nutrient pollution across the watershed and tidal Bay, demonstrating the benefits of management actions.
- Progress has slowed in recent years, particularly for phosphorus and sediment.
- Rising temperatures and other estuarine processes are influencing ecological responses and complicating recovery efforts.
- Monitoring networks provide critical data for evaluating restoration progress, identifying problem areas, and informing future management decisions.
- LGAC members asked about where funding for the monitoring programs comes from and why the public should trust the data. Presenters explained that the monitoring programs are funded through a broad partnership of local governments, state and federal agencies, NGOs, and grant programs. They also added

that the data results from monitoring are supported by rigorous scientific methods, quality assurance and control, and extensive peer review.
- Updated information about nontidal monitoring results is available here; Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Loads and Trends. Update information about tidal monitoring is on the Bay Trends Map.
- Monitoring data is summarized in Tributary Studies that have accompanying storymaps.

VII. Presentation: Briefing on METRIC

An overview of the Monitored and Expected Total Reduction Indicator for the Chesapeake (METRIC) app, which is designed to compare water quality monitoring data and water quality modeled results.

Lead: Kaylyn Gootman, Chesapeake Bay Program (gootman.kaylyn@epa.gov)
Materials: Presentation
Discussion Notes:

- The METRIC tool is significant because it bridges the gap between planning with models and assessing with monitored data. Here is a link to the online application: https://wqs.chesapeakebay.net/metric/
- METRIC compares four sources of information: Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) targets (planned reductions); Monitoring data from the Non-Tidal Network; CAST model estimates (Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool); Dynamic watershed model estimates, which account for environmental factors and lag times
- METRIC Allows users to: Select individual watersheds and stations; View pollutant trends for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment; Compare monitoring results with modeled expectations; and Examine pollutant sources and sector contributions (agriculture, urban, wastewater, septic, natural sources).
- LGAC members inquired about why the standard CAST model was used if the adjusted CAST model matches monitoring data better. K. Gootman answered that the standard CAST model is used because it is the agreed-upon accountability tool while the adjusted model helps explain why observed conditions may differ from modeled expectations.
- LGAC members asked who the intended audience for the METRIC tool is. K. Gootman responded that the primary audience is technical users but it is increasingly viewed as a tool that can support broader public and policy discussions about restoration progress.
- CBP Blog post on Connecting modeling and monitoring at the watershed level.

VIII. Plenary Discussion with LGAC members

Lead: Councilmember Josh Hastings, LGAC Chair
Materials: None
Discussion Notes:

- LGAC members reflected on the presentations about water quality monitoring, modeling, and the new METRIC tool.
- LGAC members generally agreed that monitoring and modeling are essential and that better communication is needed to help non-technical audiences understand and trust the results.
- LGAC members highlighted the importance of connecting technical information to local experiences and visible outcomes.
- LGAC members discussed interest in understanding additional benefits, costs, and uses of water-quality monitoring beyond Bay restoration.

IX. Adjourn

Friday June 5, 2026

X. Welcome

Councilmember Hastings welcomed LGAC members and reviewed the meeting objectives.

Lead: Councilmember Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
Materials: None

XI. Jurisdiction Meeting Report-Outs and Member Updates

Lead: LGAC Vice Chairs
Materials: None
Discussion Notes:

- DC - The District of Columbia delegation discussed DOEE's leadership in implementation of the Engaged Communities goal. They also discussed future plans for LGAC membership
- DE - The Delaware delegation highlighted the recent Delmarva peer-to-peer tour, which they saw as one of the most successful tours to date. The delegation also announced the upcoming retirement of Jim Sullivan after 40 years of service and introduced Samantha Cotten as his replacement. The delegation stated that state officials will continue outreach to municipalities and town managers to identify opportunities for conservation and stormwater projects.
- MD - The Maryland delegation received updates from Maryland DNR and MDE, and were informed that Maryland DNR's Grants Gateway funding is currently open. The delegation also spent time discussing the Potomac Interceptor sewage spill and emphasized the importance of transparency, accountability, and clear communication to maintain public trust in restoration efforts.
- NY - The New York delegation reported several ongoing state-level initiatives focused on watershed resilience, stormwater management, and water quality. The delegation also discussed staffing within New York's Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC); while current participation comes from the Division of Water, there is interest in expanding engagement from other divisions, including Fish and Wildlife and Forests and Lands.
- PA - The Pennsylvania delegation received updates for DEP on meeting the Chesapeake Bay EC charge of having a streamlined framework by June 30th. The state will be taking a look at which workgroups they will be actively participating in and which groups that will sign onto the outcome for but will be pursuing their own progress on.
- VA - The Virginia delegation received updates from the leadership of Natural and Historic Resources and DEQ. Members received an update on the VA budget, and discussed REGGI as a key funding source for flood mitigation. Discussed the Potomac Interceptor sewage spill and raised the issue of interstate collaboration when sharing a water boundary that impacts local governments.
- WV - LGAC Staff have been working with the Governor's Office on appointing a new WV member.

XII. Business Meeting

- Executive Committee Report (Chair and First Vice Chair)
- LGAC Coordinator's Report (Coordinator)
- Local Government Leadership Workgroup Report (Chair)

Lead: Councilmember Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
Materials: Presentations linked above
Discussion Notes:

- LGAC Chair emphasized continued focus on strengthening relationships across advisory committees and ensuring local government voices remain influential in Chesapeake Bay Program decision-making.
- M. Qually reported that significant discussions are underway regarding the Bay Program's new governance framework, noting strong leadership support for advisory committees and encouragement for LGAC members to engage more directly with goal teams under the new structure.
- LGAC Coordinator outlined the LGAC's annual recommendations process. L. Cattell Noll a finalized local government governance document designed to help state and federal partners better understand local government structures, authorities, and watershed-related spending.
- LGAC Coordinator reported progress on state-specific implementation fact sheets that will help local governments understand their responsibilities under the revised *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.*
- LGAC Coordinator, L. Cattell Noll announced anticipated staffing changes: she will transition into a new role coordinating the Local Government Leadership Workgroup. If LGAC funding is awarded to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay, then Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Coordinator, Jess Blackburn, will assume LGAC coordination responsibilities.

- LGAC members discussed concerns about reduced staffing capacity, potential impact on outreach activities, peer-to-peer tours, and conference participation.
- LGAC members recognized L. Cattell Noll for her significant contribution to LGAC and praised her for her leadership, organizational skills, and role in strengthening the committee's effectiveness and relationships across the partnership.
- LGLW Chair shared ongoing work under the revised CBP structure that the group has updated outcome language and targets and are actively aligning management strategies, governance updates, and deadlines within the revised framework.
- LGLW Chair shared a video from the recent peer-to-peer tour across the Delmarva region.
- LGLW Chair shared that the workgroup completed a technical assistance inventory and gap analysis (via EPIC) identifying where local governments need more support. Findings will inform future improvements in how tools, resources, and communication are delivered to local governments, aiming to strengthen the usability of state/federal support programs.

XIII. Chesapeake Bay Program Updates

Lead: Keith Bollt, Chesapeake Bay Program Environmental Protection Specialist
Materials: Presentation
Discussion Notes:

- LGAC Coordinator acknowledged that feedback from the March quarterly meeting on governance, structure, and management strategies was highly valuable and led to substantive revision in the documents.
- K. Bollt reinforced that EPA leadership deeply appreciated the contributions from LGAC.

XIV. Lightning Talks: Case Studies on Water Quality Monitoring and Modeling

Through a series of short case studies, LGAC members explored the on-the-ground impacts of water quality monitoring and modeling throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

Facilitator: Councilmember Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair
Speakers:

- County Scale Water Quality Monitoring - Commissioner Julie Wheeler, York County, PA
- Small Agricultural Watersheds - Jimmy Webber, USGS
- Stream De-listing - Carly Dean, Chesapeake Conservancy
- Community Water Quality Monitoring - Matthew Kierce, Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative

Materials: Presentations linked above
Discussion Notes:

- J. Wheeler shared that York County developed a locally driven, science-based water monitoring program to verify pollution estimates and better target conservation efforts. The program has produced data that differs significantly from previous model-based estimates, provided a stronger basis for local decision-making, strengthened collaboration with farmers and agencies, and created a long-term framework for tracking watershed health. The York County Water Quality Dashboard has additional data.
- M. Qually expressed interest in the project as a model for Adams County and requested information on costs and implementation details, noting that a strategically placed monitor could help Adams County better understand what leaves the county and flows downstream.
- J. Webber shared that USGS is expanding beyond large-river trend monitoring to smaller watershed studies that can better connect conservation actions with measurable water-quality outcomes. The agency sees monitoring as both a scientific and relationship-building tool, using local data, conservation practice information, and stakeholder partnerships to improve watershed management. USGS one-pager with more information.
- LGAC members asked how monitoring can provide additional benefits for local governments. J. Webber answered that additional metrics can increase public interest and that monitoring biological conditions alongside nutrient data creates a more compelling and understandable picture of watershed health for residents and local officials.

- C. Dean shared that the success behind stream de-listing depends on extensive collaboration among state agencies, county conservation districts, nonprofits, volunteer groups, landowners, researchers, and funders. Different partners contribute different pieces of the work and no single organization can achieve stream delisting alone.
- M. Kierce shared background on the Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative and how volunteer observations have led significant actions such as EPA-mandated corrective actions and the construction of a $23 million treatment facility.
- Three presenters (USGS, Chesapeake Conservancy, and CMC) stressed that partnerships are essential, by combining government agencies, nonprofits, researchers, volunteers, and local communities, the result is better monitoring data and more effective restoration outcomes.

XV. Plenary Discussion with LGAC Members

Lead: Councilmember Josh Hastings, LGAC Chair
Materials: None
Discussion Notes:

- LGAC members emphasized that local officials are unlikely to seek out technical data on their own. Monitoring results need to be communicated through clear summaries, outreach, peer-to-peer learning, and local partnerships.
- LGAC members viewed the volunteer monitoring and stream restoration examples as effective ways to engage communities, demonstrate success, and build support for watershed restoration efforts.
- LGAC members highlighted stream delisting as a tangible indicator of environmental improvement that can help demonstrate the value of restoration investments.
- LGAC members raised questions about the effects of stream temperature and stormwater runoff on aquatic life, suggesting a potential topic for future exploration.
- LGAC Members generally agreed on several overarching takeaways from the two day meeting:
    - Monitoring and modeling are complementary tools.
    - Policy should be informed by monitoring data and modeling results.
    - Local governments need data translated into practical, accessible information.

Actions:

- LGAC staff will provide members with access to resources and materials referenced during the meeting.
- Members will receive the finalized document explaining local government structures within the Chesapeake Bay Program.
- Staff and state partners will continue work on state specific local government implementation fact sheets. LGAC members will have an opportunity to review them before finalization.
- LGAC chair, vice chair, staff, EPA, and partners will continue coordinating and communicating during the upcoming staff transition period.
- LGAC staff will work with LGAC chair and vice chairs to draft leadership position descriptions and ensure LGAC bylaws comply with the new CBP Governance and Management Framework.
- Members were asked to reflect on the meeting themes and begin considering recommendations for the EC. LGAC members will refine these reflections into recommendations at the September LGAC meeting.

XVI. Wrap-Up

LGAC members reviewed any new business, future agenda items, and action items from this meeting.

Lead: Councilmember Hastings, Local Government Advisory Committee Chair

XVII. Adjourn

- Next LGAC meeting will be held virtually on Thursday September 24th and Friday September 25th, 2026

Attendees:

LGAC Members: Amy Dubois, Andria McClellan, Brianne Nadeau, Bruce Williams, Cindy Dyballa, Daniel Chao, Don Phillips, Elizabeth Grant, Frank Dawson, Frederick Faylona, Jasmine Gore, John Carroll, Josh Hastings, Leo Lutz, Martin Qually, Penny Gross, Richard Baugh, Sheila Noll, Susan Ryan

LGAC Staff: Laura Cattell Noll and Alex LoCurto.

LGLW Staff: Rick Mittler.

Speakers/Guests: Andrew Chambers (Alliance), Anna Killius (CBC), Ashley Curry (Alliance), Ashley Hullinger (PA DEP), Carly Dean (Chesapeake Conservancy), Carrie Decker (MD DNR), Cassandra Davis (NYSDEC), Erin Vesey (PA DEP), Jess Blackburn (Alliance), Jim Sullivan (DNREC), Jimmy Webber (USGS), John Lancaster (PA DEP), Julie Wheeler (York County, PA), Kathy Stecker (MDE), Kayli Ottomanelli (Alliance), Kaylyn Gootman (EPA), KC Filippino (Hampton Roads PDC), Keith Bollt (EPA), Ken Hyer (USGS), Khesha Reed (EPA), Lara Fowler (Penn State), Lee McDonnell (EPA), Marisa Baldine (Alliance), Matthew Kierce (Isaac Walton League), Maura Christian (VA DEQ), Meg Cole (CRC), Norah Carlos (CBC), Olivia Shores (WV Region 9), Rebecca Murphy (UMCES), Samantha Cotten (DNREC), Scott Heidel (PA DEP), Suzanne Trevena (EPA), Tou Matthews (CRC), Tyler Trostle (PA DEP), Xander Heidel (PA DEP)