



BEYOND 2025: REIMAGINING THE CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED AGREEMENT

July 2, 2025

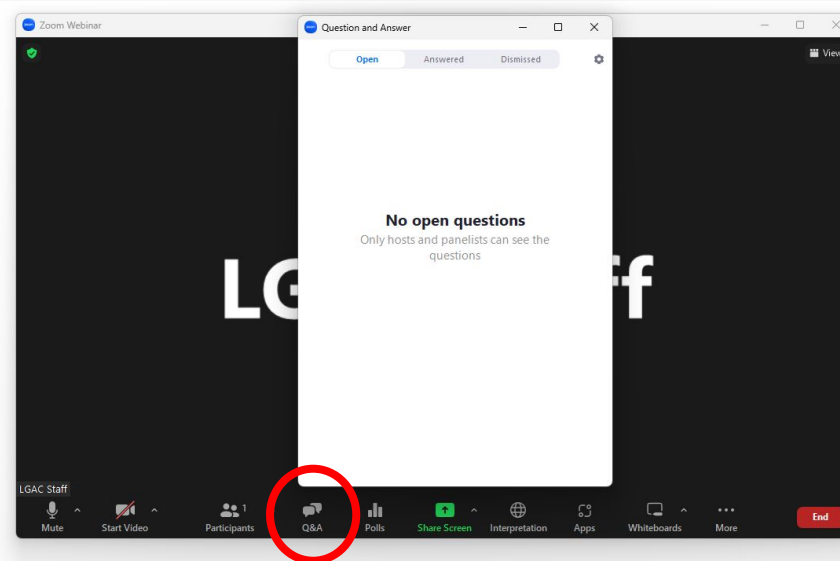
Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

Housekeeping

- All participants are muted.
- Please ask questions!
 - Type them into the Q & A Box located at the bottom of the webinar. We'll answer it during the Q & A portion.
- This webinar is being recorded. It will be posted within 48 hours to the Chesapeake Bay Program's YouTube page: <https://www.youtube.com/c/chesbayprogram>.

zoom

Support English



Presenters



Leila Duman
Bays Restoration Officer,
Maryland Department of
Natural Resources



Anna Killius
Executive Director,
Chesapeake Bay Commission

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a Partnership



NY



DC



VA



MD



PA



DE



WV



Bay Commission



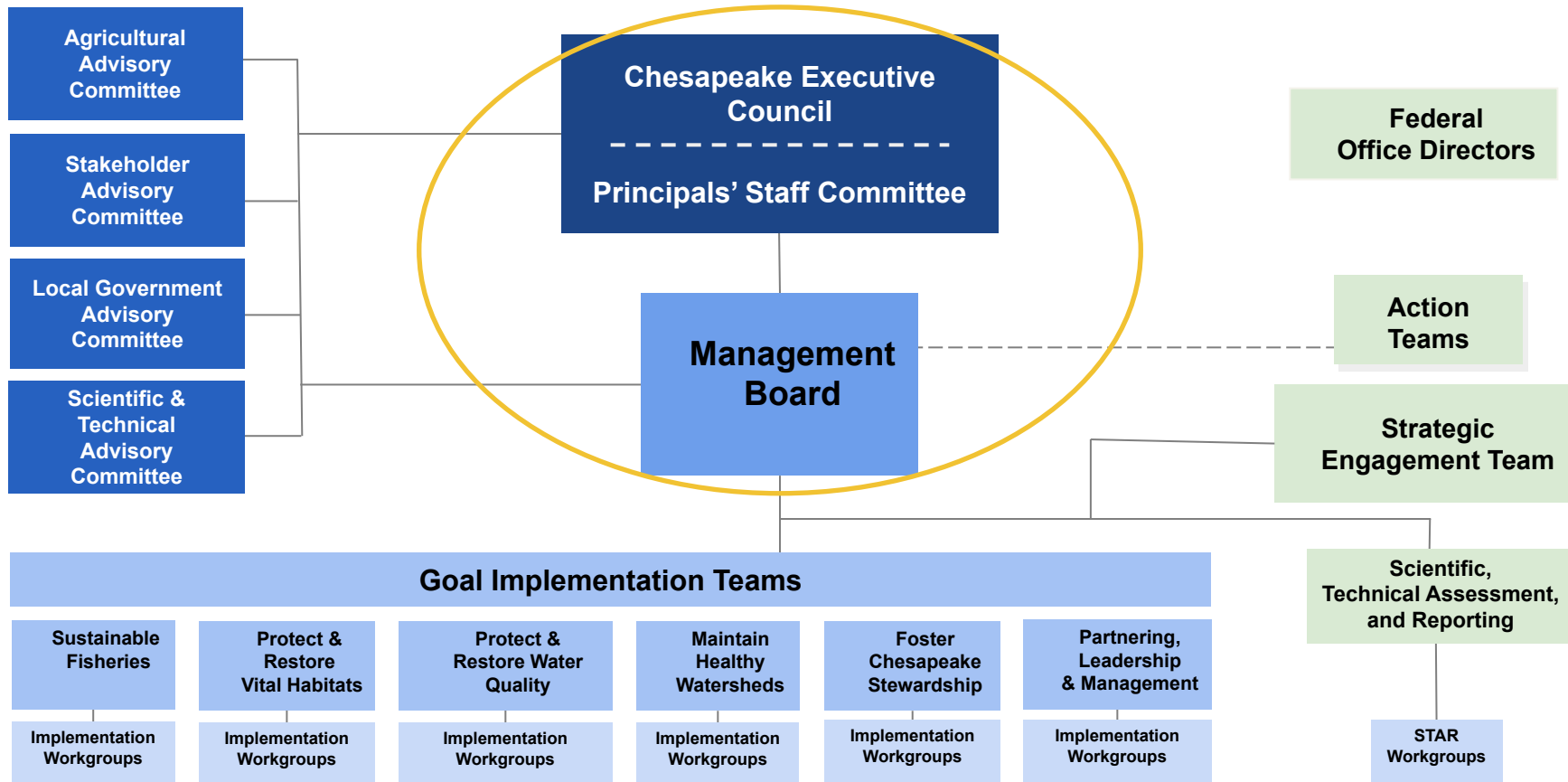
Chesapeake Bay Program



Federal
Partners



Structure and Leadership





PARTNERSHIP HISTORY

1983: First *Bay Agreement* signed and
Chesapeake Bay Program formed

1987: Second *Chesapeake Bay Agreement*
– numeric goals for pollution reduction

2000: *Chesapeake 2000 Agreement*
– strategy for restoration through 2010

2009: Chesapeake Bay Executive Order

2010: Chesapeake Bay TMDL established
– acknowledged need of regulatory approach

2014: ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*** – accountability, adaptive management

2025: “Beyond 2025” and *Agreement* revisions



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What is the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement?*

- The *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* is a Voluntary agreement between the six watershed states, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the federal government.
- Contains 10 goals and 31 outcomes to advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay.



Our Vision

“The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved lands and access to the water, a vibrant cultural heritage and a diversity of engaged citizens and stakeholders.”

Our 10 Goals from the 2014 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*



1. Sustainable Fisheries



2. Vital Habitats



3. Water Quality



4. Toxic Contaminants



5. Healthy Watersheds



6. Stewardship



7. Land Conservation



8. Public Access



9. Environmental Literacy



10. Climate Resiliency

Outcome Status

- 18 On-course or Completed
- 13 Off-course or Uncertain



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Blue Crab Abundance
Blue Crab Management
Fish Habitat
Forage Fish
Oysters
Fish Passage
Stream Health
2017 WIPs
Water Quality Standards Attainment & Monitoring
Toxics Contaminants Research
Land Use Methods and Metrics
Land Use Options Evaluation
Protected Lands
Public Access Site Development
Environmental Literacy Planning
Sustainable Schools
Local Leadership
Climate Monitoring and Assessments



Black Duck
Brook Trout
Forest Buffers
Submerged Aquatic Vegetation
Tree Canopy
Wetlands
2025 WIPs
Toxic Contaminants Policy & Prevention
Healthy Watersheds
Student Outcome
Diversity
Climate Adaptation



Stewardship

What is “Beyond 2025” and why is the year 2025 so important?



Beyond 2025 refers to the effort being undertaken by the Chesapeake Bay Program to determine the next steps in restoring and conserving the Chesapeake Bay post-2025.



When the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* was signed in 2014, many of the 31 outcomes, or measurable restoration targets, listed 2025 as the intended date in which to meet these objectives.

2024 Executive Council 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.

Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

Revisions Process

Watershed Agreement Section

Revision Lead

Vision

Principals' Staff Committee

Preamble

Principals' Staff Committee

Principles

Principals' Staff Committee

Goals

Principals' Staff Committee, Management Board support

Outcomes

Management Board, Outcome Leads

Management Strategies

Principals' Staff Committee, Management Board

Revised Vision

“The Chesapeake Bay Program partners envision an environmentally and economically sustainable and resilient Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water, abundant life, conserved and healthy working lands, a vibrant cultural heritage and a wide range of engaged individuals whose communities enjoy access to the waters and natural landscapes of the region.”

Revised Preamble



Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay watershed is one of the most extraordinary places in America, spanning six states and the District of Columbia. As the nation's largest and one of the most productive estuaries in the world, the Chesapeake Bay and its vast network of more than 180,000 miles of streams, creeks and rivers holds tremendous ecological, cultural, economic, historic and recreational value for the more than 18 million people who live, work and play in the region.

To restore, conserve and protect this national treasure, the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership was formed in 1983 when the governors of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the mayor of the District of Columbia, the chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency signed the first *Chesapeake Bay Agreement*. That initial *Bay Agreement* recognized the "historical decline of living resources" in the Chesapeake Bay and committed to a cooperative approach to "fully address the extent, complexity and sources of pollutants entering the Bay." For more than 40 years, this regional partnership has been recognized as one of the nation's premier estuarine restoration, conservation and protection efforts, implementing policies, engaging in scientific investigation and coordinating actions among the states, the District of Columbia and the federal government.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners have made much progress in that time, and there is still more to do—especially in the face of continued challenges such as changes in population, loss of farm and forest lands, declining fish and wildlife resources, threats to biodiversity, emerging contaminants and changing environmental conditions. Through the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, the partnership remains committed to restoring, protecting and conserving the Bay and its watershed through effort based in and guided by science and responsive to the lessons learned from our past and shared experiences.

One of the most important lessons the partners have learned from the past four decades is that although watershed-wide partnerships can help to coordinate and catalyze progress, implementation is locally inspired and driven. Local governments, tribes, communities, businesses, watershed groups and other nongovernmental organizations are key partners in our work. Working together to engage, empower and facilitate these partner networks will leverage resources and ensure better outcomes for all watershed communities.

The partnership's experience with watershed restoration, conservation and protection efforts has shown that measurable progress, coupled with clear accountability, yield the most effective results. The partnership continues to embrace new ideas, technologies and policies that will help meet our goals. We are committed to improving accountability, transparency and outreach to strengthen and increase public confidence in our work.

The 1983 *Chesapeake Bay Agreement* laid the foundation for a cooperative program that included four jurisdictions along with the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the federal government. Since 2014, the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* has included all seven jurisdictions in the watershed, with New York, West Virginia and Delaware joining the original signatories as full partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Chesapeake Executive Council. Numerous federal agencies also continue their longstanding commitment to restoring, conserving and protecting the Chesapeake Bay.

This *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* acknowledges that the partnership cannot address every issue at once and that progress must be made in a strategic manner, focusing on efforts that will achieve the most meaningful and cost-effective results. Watershed restoration, conservation and protection are integral drivers of the region's economy, health and culture. To that end, the partnership is committed to achieving success while maximizing the community and economic benefits across the watershed. The signatories to this voluntary agreement commit to achieving the restoration, conservation and protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, its water, habitats and living resources for the benefit of all people living in and visiting this nationally treasured watershed.

Revised Principles



Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

The Chesapeake Bay Program commits to operate under the following principles, which reflect the partners' collective, core values. The principles guide the work of the partnership as we develop policy and take action to achieve the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement's* Goals and Outcomes.

The partnership will:

- **Collaborate** to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- **Achieve Goals and Outcomes** in a measurable and timely way and at the least possible cost to the public.
- **Represent the interests of all communities** throughout the watershed fairly and effectively.
- **Use place-based approaches**, where appropriate, to target specific geographic areas and produce recognizable benefits to local communities while contributing to larger ecosystem goals.
- **Acknowledge, support and embrace local governments** and other local entities in watershed restoration, conservation and protection activities.
- **Operate with transparency** in program decisions, policies, actions and reporting on progress to strengthen public trust and confidence in our efforts.
- **Use science-based decision-making, consider Indigenous and local knowledge and seek out innovative technologies and approaches** to support sound management decisions in a changing system.
- **Maintain and enhance a coordinated watershed-wide monitoring and research program** to support decision-making, track progress and assess the effectiveness of management actions.
- **Anticipate and respond to changing conditions**, including long-term trends in sea level, temperature, precipitation, land use and other variables.
- **Adaptively manage** at all levels of the partnership to foster continuous improvement informed by the best available science and strong working relationships.
- **Seek consensus across the partnership** when making decisions.
- **Meaningfully engage the public** to foster collaboration and grow the partnership to support and carry out the restoration, conservation and protection activities necessary to achieve the Goals and Outcomes of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*.
- **Integrate tribal nations into the partnership** in a manner that appropriately considers their unique status as independent sovereign nations.
- **Integrate social science holistically throughout the partnership** to better understand and measure how human behavior can drive natural resource use, management and decision-making.
- **Facilitate outreach to and welcome participation by all communities** regarding the partnership's activities, decisions and implementation of this *Watershed Agreement*.

Revised Watershed Agreement Structure



Goals: Broad themes critical to achieving the Watershed Agreement vision.



Outcomes : Long-term, high-level change that is desired or the difference made by the partnership's actions.



Targets: Direct products of the actions planned for and taken as partners.



Activities: Specific actions taken to achieve the targets.

Simplified 4 Goal Framework



Healthy Landscapes

Conserve, restore and enhance landscapes of ecological, economic and cultural value to maintain water quality, provide habitat for wildlife and increase resilience.

Clean Water

Reduce pollutants entering the Bay and its rivers to achieve the water quality necessary to support our aquatic wildlife and protect human health.

Thriving Habitat & Wildlife

Protect, restore and sustain fisheries and wildlife, as well as the network of land and water habitats they depend on, to promote a balanced and resilient ecosystem and support local economies and recreational opportunities.

Engaged Communities

Engage and grow a community of local stewards and leaders through education, recreation and professional opportunities.

Revised Goals & Outcomes



The commitments contained in this section are the Goals and Outcomes that the signatories will work on collectively to advance restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem and its watershed. The Goals articulate the desired high-level aspects of the partners' Vision. The Outcomes related to each Goal are specific, time-bound, measurable targets that directly contribute to achieving that Goal.

The Management Strategies, further described in the next section of this *Watershed Agreement*, articulate the actions necessary to achieve the Goals and Outcomes. This work will require effort from many, including all levels of government, academic institutions, nongovernmental organizations, watershed groups, businesses and individuals. Local governments will continue to play a unique and critical role in helping the partnership realize this shared Vision for the Chesapeake Bay. Signatories will participate in achieving the Outcomes of this *Watershed Agreement* in the manner described in the "Management Strategies Development and Implementation" section.

While the Goals and Outcomes are described by separate topic areas, the signatories recognize that they are interrelated. Improvements in habitat and water quality lead to healthier living resources. Environmentally literate people are more engaged stewards of the Chesapeake Bay's healthy watersheds. Better water quality means swimmable, fishable waters for Bay residents and visitors. Increased public access to the Bay inspires people to care for critical landscapes and honor the region's heritage and culture. Healthy fish and shellfish populations support a vibrant economy for a spectrum of fishing-related industries. The signatories recognize that all aspects of the ecosystem are connected and that these Goals and Outcomes support the health and the protection of the entire Bay watershed.

As the signatories identify new opportunities and concerns, Goals or Outcomes may be adopted or modified. Any changes or additions to Goals will be approved by the Executive Council. The Principals' Staff Committee will approve changes or additions to Outcomes, although significant changes or additions will be raised to the Executive Council for approval. Proposed changes to Goals and Outcomes or the addition of new ones will be open for public input before being finalized. Final changes or additions will be available on the Chesapeake Bay Program's website.



Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

How were outcomes revised?

Updated, 17: Maintains original intent, language added to make it more specific, measurable, actionable, relevant or timely.

Consolidated, 5: Outcomes merged to form a single outcome or activities underneath an outcome are integrated into other outcomes.

Removed, 2.

Replaced, 3: Relates to original outcome's intent or subject.

Reclassified, 5: Changed to a target or activity underneath another outcome.

Regrouped & Revised Outcomes

Healthy Landscapes

- Healthy Forests and Trees*
- Protected Lands*
- Land Use Decision Support
- Adapting to Changing Environmental Conditions

Clean Water

- Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment**
- Toxic Contaminants Mitigation
- Water Quality Standards Attainment and Monitoring

Thriving Habitat and Wildlife

- Blue Crab Sustainability
- Brook Trout*
- Fish Habitat**
- Fish Passage
- Oysters
- Stream Health
- Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)
- Wetlands**

Engaged Communities

- Local Leadership
- Public Access*
- School District Planning
- Stewardship
- Student Experiences
- Workforce

* Outcome target placeholders

** Plans to develop targets

Revised Management Strategies Development and Implementation



Photo: Chesapeake Bay Program

Within X timeframe (previously "one year") of the revision of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, the Chesapeake Bay Program's Goal Implementation Teams will update or develop Management Strategies for the Outcomes that support the Goals of this *Watershed Agreement*. These strategies outline the means for accomplishing each Outcome as well as monitoring, assessing and reporting progress and coordinating actions among partners and stakeholders as necessary. Management Strategies describe how local governments, Indigenous representatives, nonprofit and private partners are engaged; where actions, tools or technical support are needed to empower local governments and others to do their part; and what steps are necessary to facilitate greater local participation in achieving the Outcome.

Participation in Management Strategies or participating in the achievement of Outcomes varies by signatory based on differing priorities across the watershed. This participation may include commitments, such as: sharing knowledge, data or information, educating the public, working on future legislation, and developing or implementing programs or practices. Management Strategies, which are aimed at implementing Outcomes, identify participating signatories and other stakeholders, including local governments and nonprofit organizations, and will be implemented in X-year (previously "2-year") periods.

The signatories and other partners shall thereafter update and/or modify such commitments every X (previously "2") years. Specific Management Strategies will be updated in consultation with stakeholders, organizations and other agencies, and will include a period for public input and review prior to final adoption.

Management Strategies may address multiple Outcomes if deemed appropriate. Goal Implementation Teams will re-evaluate with X frequency (previously "biennially") and update strategies as necessary, with attention to changing environmental and economic conditions. Partners may identify policy changes to address these conditions and minimize obstacles to achieve the Outcomes.

Stakeholder input will be incorporated into the development and reevaluation of each of the strategies. The Chesapeake Bay Program will continue to make these strategies and reports on progress available to the public in a transparent manner on its websites and through public meetings of the appropriate Goal Implementation Team and Management Board.

The Goal Implementation Teams will submit the Management Strategies to the partnership's Management Board for review. If the Management Board determines that any strategy or plan developed prior to the revision of this *Watershed Agreement* meets the requirements of a Management Strategy as defined above, no new strategy needs to be developed. This includes, but is not limited to, the strategies and plans for implementing the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load.

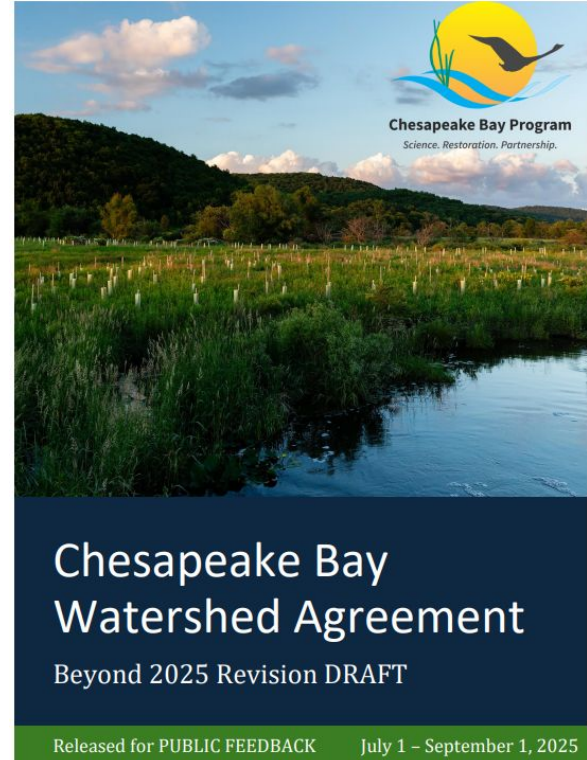
We Want All the Feedback!



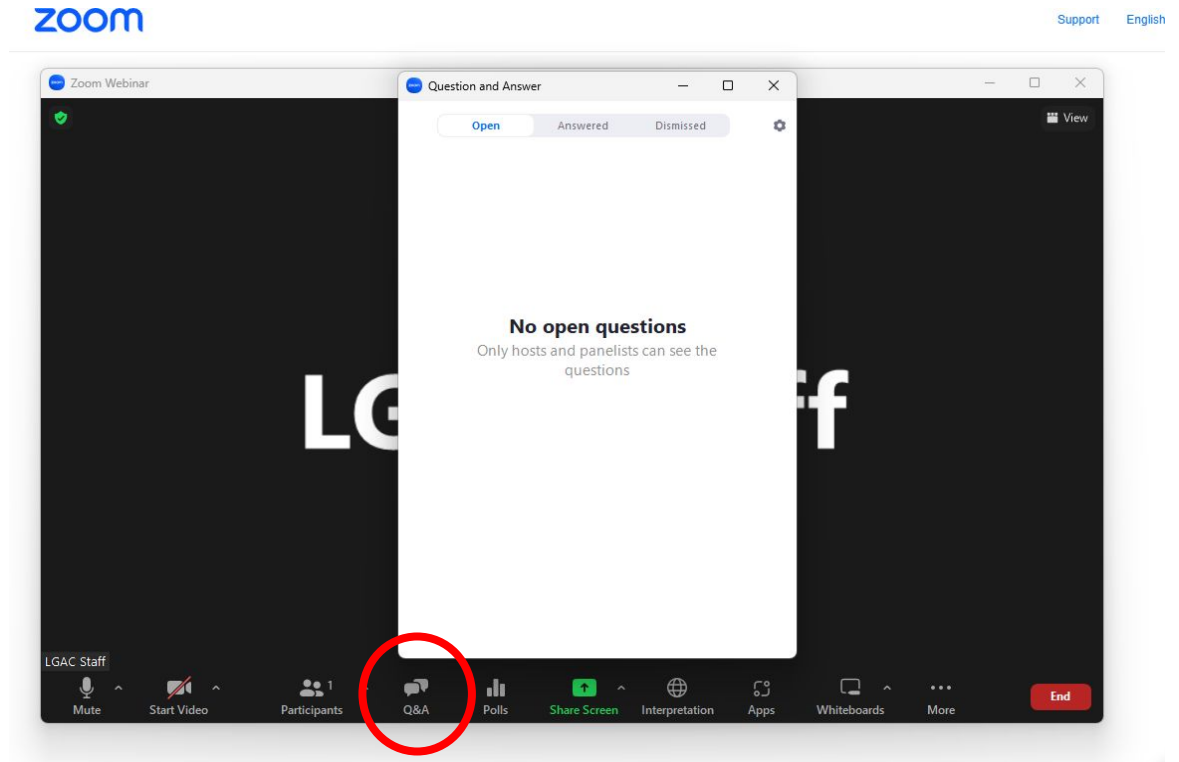
- Public feedback period opened on Tuesday, July 1 and runs for 60 days until Monday, September 1.
- Everything you need to know can be found at <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/what/what-guides-us/planning-for-2025-and-beyond>
- Feedback can be emailed to comments@chesapeakebay.net



- Chesapeake Bay Program staff is available to talk with any of your members or groups about Beyond 2025.



Time for Questions!



Upcoming Beyond 2025 Webinars

- **July 8**
 - Thriving Habitats and Wildlife: A Deep Dive into the Revised Goal of the Watershed Agreement
 - (Blue Crab Sustainability, Oysters, Fish Habitat, Fish Passage, Brook Trout, Stream Health, Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV), Wetlands)
- **July 15**
 - Clean Water for a Healthy Bay: Exploring the next revised Goal of the Watershed Agreement
 - (Reducing Excess Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment, Toxic Contaminants Mitigation, Water Quality Standards Monitoring and Assessment)
- **July 24**
 - Understanding another revised Goal of the Watershed Agreement: Healthy Landscapes
 - (Land Use Decision Support, Protected Lands, Healthy Forests and Trees, Adapt to Changing Environmental Conditions)
- **July 30**
 - Engaged Communities: A Closer Look at Final Proposed Goal of the Watershed Agreement
 - (Workforce, School District Planning, Local Leadership, Student Experiences, Public Access)