Climate Change Directive for EC 2021

Adapted from presentation given by Ann Jennings, Chair of the Climate Change Action Team, to the PSC in June 2021

Preparing the Draft Executive Directive - Guiding Principles

- Respect jurisdictional differences in responses to climate change and impacts of climate change on local communities.
- Prioritize the response to climate change for vulnerable populations, underserved communities and working lands (farms and forests).
- Recognize that water quality best management practices sequester carbon and climate mitigation measures reduce nitrogen pollution.
- Focus on adaptation, resilience and mitigation and the co-benefits provided by water quality measures and habitat restoration.
- Maintain focus on the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Embed the partnership's response to climate change throughout the program.
- Don't duplicate climate work by the jurisdictions or other federal programs.
- Ensure the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's flagship scientific endeavors are informed by the most advanced climate monitoring, tools, science, and practice standards.
- Recognize that delayed action on climate change will increase the cost of restoring the Chesapeake Bay.
- Continue to educate, learn, adapt and innovate.

The Chesapeake Bay Executive Council Commits To:

- Address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work to restore the Bay and its watershed;
- Prioritize communities, working lands, and habitats most vulnerable to ever-increasing risks;
- Apply the best scientific, modeling, monitoring and planning capabilities of the Chesapeake Bay Program; and,
- Connect Chesapeake Bay restoration outcomes with emerging opportunities in climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience.

Address the threats of climate change in all aspects of the partnership's work to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed

- Integrate climate science and adaptation to climate change throughout the work of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, and direct the Management Board to ensure the partnership's organizational structure effectively advances this integration.
- Direct the Management Board to incorporate climate risks into the management strategies of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement outcomes.
- Ensure the science, restoration and partnership programs equitably address the impacts of climate change on vulnerable populations, including indigenous people, historically underrepresented communities, those of lower economic status, and people of color, taking into account existing social, economic, and health disparities.
- Continuously improve our knowledge of and response to the threats of climate change and report on implementation of this Executive Directive and new challenges at Chesapeake Executive Council annual meetings.

Prioritize communities and habitats most vulnerable to ever-increasing risks

- Emphasize the continued need to update best management practice design standards to account for the impacts of climate change, using leading predictive models and tools, to insure investments made today continue to yield benefits even as the climate changes.
- Ensure that we focus on achieving our outcomes to conserve and restore wetlands, forest buffers and urban tree canopies for both increased resilience to climate impacts and to assist in meeting national goals for achieving 30 percent of lands and waters conserved by 2030.
- Build climate science into environmental literacy programs for students, the public, and decision-makers ensuring inclusion of the most vulnerable habitats, people, communities and industries.

Apply the best scientific, modeling, monitoring and planning capabilities of the Chesapeake Bay Program

- Determine capacity needed to monitor the impacts of climate change on our natural resources within the existing Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's science programs and evaluate the opportunity to fill those needs with ongoing climate change monitoring programs.
- Improve the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool cost calculator to account for climate change so that the partnership can ensure investments in water quality take into account the impacts of delayed action.

Connect Chesapeake Bay restoration goals with emerging opportunities in climate adaptation, mitigation, and resilience

- Recognize and, where feasible, assess and adopt the water quality practices that sequester greenhouse gases, and the climate mitigation practices that reduce nitrogen pollution to watersheds.
- Prioritize the adoption of farming and forestry best management practices to maximize the co-benefits of improved water quality, resilience, carbon sequestration, and soil health.
- Promote greenhouse gas mitigation through restoring coastal ecosystems and enhancing green infrastructure throughout the watershed.
- Utilize conservation finance where appropriate to leverage public and increase private investments, including emerging carbon markets, in Chesapeake Bay restoration.