Water Quality Goal Implementation Team
Draft Governance Protocols

The charge of the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership's Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) is to "evaluate, focus, and accelerate the implementation of practices, policies, and programs that will restore water quality in the Chesapeake Bay to conditions that support living resources and protect human health."[1] To meet this charge, it is essential to have specific governance protocols in place to help guide our decision-making process; address those issues that have cross-sector implications; and provide a clear path for key informational and decisional check points on priorities and actions that can impact the achievement of our shared water quality goals and commitments.

The Partnership's Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) discussed at their February 28, 2014 meeting specific decision making procedures[2] and directed the Chesapeake Bay Program to adhere to these procedures until a final, PSC-approved governance document is in place. The approach and definitions described below are in line with those governance decisions made by the PSC.

The purpose of this governance document is three-fold: (1) to clearly articulate a consistent and transparent decision-making process; (2) to ensure that voting procedures are firmly in place if a consensus cannot be reached on any issue requiring a WQGIT and WQGIT Workgroup decision; and (3) describe a communication process for identifying cross-sector issues that require a decision by the WQGIT.

The following governance protocols apply to the WQGIT and the WQGIT Workgroups[3]:

Governance Approach
Decision-making for the WQGIT and the WQGIT Workgroups will be done by members participating in the Management Strategies through consensus. Consensus is defined as all parties present having either agreed on a course of action and/or that no party objected to it. If after substantial negotiations consensus cannot be reached, and only as a last resort, a super majority vote will be utilized by the WQGIT and the WQGIT Workgroups.

Definition of Management Strategies
- The Management Strategies for the WQGIT and the WQGIT Workgroups are the Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs), as reflected in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and agreed to by the WQGIT.

- Participation in the Management Strategies (i.e. WIPs) is made unilaterally by the signatories to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

Utilization of a Supermajority Vote
- If consensus cannot be reached, the WQGIT or WQGIT Workgroup Chair will move the decision to a vote, and will ensure that specific voting procedures are followed:
  - A supermajority is defined as a 7-2 vote.
  - Abstaining votes, neutral votes, or voting members and their alternates not present are not considered.
  - Each jurisdiction, federal agency, and other organization recognized as official voting members are allowed only one vote.

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[1] http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/water_quality_goal_implementation_team
[2] http://www.chesapeakebay.net/channel_files/21516/actionsdecisions_1-16-14_v2.docx
[3] http://www.chesapeakebay.net/groups/group/water_quality_goal_implementation_team#relgroups

Definition of a Voting Member

- Voting members are the signatory representatives of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. For the Bay jurisdictions, a specific voting member is defined by the lead agency responsible for developing and implementing the WIPs and is a current, standing member of the WQGIT or a WQGIT Workgroup. Each lead agency/organization listed will identify one representative and one alternate to serve as voting members on the WQGIT or a WQGIT Workgroup:
  - Chesapeake Bay Commission
  - Commonwealth of Pennsylvania: *Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection*
  - Commonwealth of Virginia: *Virginia Department of Environmental Quality*
  - District of Columbia: *District of Columbia Department of the Environment*
  - State of Delaware: *Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control*
  - State of Maryland: *Maryland Department of the Environment*
  - State of New York: *New York State Department of Environmental Conservation*
  - State of West Virginia: *West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection*
  - For the United State of America: *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*

Communication of Cross-Sector Issues

- Following every WQGIT call, an email will be distributed that details not only the action items and decisions from that call, but also recent sector-specific Workgroup-level decisions. The intent is to keep the WQGIT membership appraised of sector-specific technical issues that are being discussed at the Workgroup level.
  - WQGIT members are encouraged to have their own coordination process with their Workgroup representatives within their respective jurisdiction/agency/organization in place to stay informed of sector-specific issues.

- Any WQGIT Workgroup decision that has cross-sector implications will come before the WQGIT membership for final approval of that decision rather than as informational briefings. This will help ensure that all partners are aware of the issue at hand and potential impacts to every sector are considered before approval.