

## Public Comments on the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* Revision Process

The following public comments were submitted to the Chesapeake Bay Program regarding the partnership's efforts to revise the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and update the structure and process of the partnership.

**Submitter:** National Wildlife Federation

**Date:** December 12, 2024

**Letter:** <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/2024-12-12-NW-CBT-Mgmt-Board-Comments.pdf>

**Submitter:** National Parks Conservation Association

**Date:** December 12, 2024

**Letter:** [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/NPCA-Comments\\_CBP-MB-Dec2024.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/NPCA-Comments_CBP-MB-Dec2024.pdf)

**Submitter:** Indigenous Conservation Council

**Date:** January 15, 2025

**Letter:** [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/Signed\\_Final\\_Resolution\\_1-2025.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/Signed_Final_Resolution_1-2025.pdf)

**Submitter:** Bill Wilson

**Date:** February 4, 2025

**Letter:**

Revising the old plan should not be the goal of the Executive Council. Rather, they should be developing a NEW plan.

The Total Maximum Load strategy did not prove effective as witnessed by the successive low grades, year in and year out. If the State of MD is not willing to take control of the chicken farming on the Eastern Shore, no progress should be expected in the Bay water quality.

The first step in planning should be to identify the major sources of nitrogen and phosphorous entering the Bay and focus on eliminating those sources. All the other activities for shore line protection, oyster restoration, under water grasses, etc are drops in the bucket.

**Submitter:** Chesapeake Bay Foundation

**Date:** February 19, 2025

**Letter:** <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/CBF-Comments-re-Outcome-Review-Part-1-of-3-2.19.25.pdf>



**Submitter:** National Park Service

**Date:** March 4, 2025

**Letter:** <https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/MB-letter-jld-03042025.pdf>

**Submitter:** Kerri Batrowny, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

**Date:** March 13, 2025

**Letter:** We support updating the protected lands outcome to reflect ongoing conservation needs beyond 2025, with new milestones for 2040 and 2050. Achieving previous goals does not mean the work is complete, as many communities still lack access to open space. We urge the incorporation of measurable indicators for wetlands, riparian and upland forests, and urban conservation, ensuring that land protection efforts extend beyond large landscapes to benefit small towns and underserved areas. Conservation should be elevated alongside restoration and science, with non-regulatory, voluntary mechanisms playing a key role in pollution prevention and sustainable land management. Maintaining a clear and trackable definition of protected lands is essential, and this initiative should be seen as complementary to economic development, fostering both environmental and economic benefits in the region.

**Submitter:** Cacapon & Lost Rivers Land Trust

**Date:** March 13, 2025

**Letter:** [https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/CLRLT\\_CBP-Protected-Lands-Request\\_2025.03.13.pdf](https://www.chesapeakebay.net/files/images/CLRLT_CBP-Protected-Lands-Request_2025.03.13.pdf)

**Submitter:** Matt Gerhart, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust

**Date:** March 18, 2025

**Letter:** I am writing to reiterate and expand upon comments I delivered at today's Management Board meeting to support the renewal and update of the Protected Lands outcomes for the Chesapeake Bay Program beyond 2025.

As I mentioned earlier, Northern Virginia Conservation Trust (NVCT) is a regional land trust with a 30-year history of protecting cherished lands within our 15-jurisdiction, 2.2 million-acre region serving greater Northern Virginia's three million residents.

We believe now is a critical time to reinforce the region's land conservation goals – in particular at the level of the Chesapeake as a whole – as our region is now seeing some of its greatest development pressures ever. Some of that is newfound in the sudden expansion of greenfield solar and data center development in the region, but much comes in the form of ongoing urban development pressures we've experienced for decades.

We, and increasingly the Chesapeake as whole, don't have the luxury of trying to outrun this pressure by securing far-off strongholds – we have to double down in our urban matrix to protect critical resources where and while we can. Our work is very much supported by robust long-term goals that match Virginia's effort to those of its partners – and we've appreciated



being a part of the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership's efforts to help move in this direction.

We also need to expand and not restrict the circles of partnership that make conservation successes work, in particular bridging to our local and tribal partners that need additional support to meet these challenges. Our community is increasingly organizing support to provide dedicated state and local funding to pursuing these goals long-term – meaning we also increasingly need to convincingly document and communicate our collective impact.

Therefore, we very much support the continuation and expansion of the land conservation outcomes of the Bay Agreement, including the development of new metrics of success across a range of resource types and areas. In particular, we would emphasize the need for better tracking and metrics for our collective urban-area work to confront the dynamic nature of the challenges noted above, in addition to support for the partnership infrastructure needed to bring all parties to the table – in particular including, for the first time ever, a new metric for the protection of tribal lands. This output metric will support meaningful conservation, connection and leadership of Tribal Nations to protect their ancestral homelands – a critical component of our future joint success.

Many thanks for the opportunity to comment.