



## Chesapeake Executive Council

### *Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course Beyond 2025*

Whereas this is the final meeting of the Chesapeake Executive Council before 2025, which is the final year that we collectively set for achieving several of the key outcomes under the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#). We, the Chesapeake Executive Council:

- Celebrate the progress made by the partnership toward meeting the goals and outcomes of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* while acknowledging the work remaining to fully achieve our shared vision;
- Recognize that the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed are dynamic, and our work must be responsive to long-established issues, emerging issues (e.g., climate change) and new scientific understandings that have impacted the level of effort needed to meet the partnership's collective restoration and conservation priorities;
- Recognize that the [Clean Water Act](#) established the Chesapeake Bay Program to improve water quality and living resources in the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed for all communities;
- Recognize that the signatories of the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* share a vision of a healthy and resilient Bay and watershed for the collective benefit of all communities and people, while also recognizing that each jurisdiction has unique challenges, resources, opportunities and goals that support their individual participation and success of the full partnership;
- Recognize that achieving both our individual and collective goals can only, and best be realized, by remaining grounded in evolving science that is inclusive of all people, especially disadvantaged communities. By centering these viewpoints together, we will be stronger as a partnership; and
- Commend the Principals' Staff Committee, Chesapeake Bay Program partners and countless interested and impacted parties in meeting the "[Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond](#)" Charge set forth by this Executive Council in 2022.

Therefore, let it be resolved that we, the Chesapeake Executive Council, in recognition of the consensus-based work of the Beyond 2025 Steering Committee, guided by the findings of their "[A Critical Path Forward for the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Beyond 2025](#)" report and our continued commitment to meet the goals of *the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, hereby direct the Principals' Staff Committee to complete the following by December 31, 2025:

1. Revisions to the *2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement*, not a new Agreement. Revisions to outcomes should be executed pursuant to the Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program. While not all outcomes will need revision, some reviews will likely result in consolidating, reducing, updating, removing, replacing, or adding new outcomes.

Proposed revisions should be considered as they are being reviewed, with every effort to complete most reviews and revisions by the end of calendar year 2025.

Furthermore, it is the intent of the Chesapeake Executive Council, that these changes reflect:

- A renewed and greater emphasis on engaging all communities of the watershed as active stewards of a healthy and resilient Chesapeake Bay and its watershed;
  - Our mandate to address water quality and living resources throughout the Bay and watershed;
  - Elevating conservation as a key pillar of the Chesapeake Bay Program, alongside science, restoration, and partnership;
  - A grounding in the most recent scientific understandings and issues that have emerged since the current *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* was signed in 2014;
  - Goals and outcomes that are measurable and time bound. Time frames should be sufficient to accomplish the outcomes as quickly as possible. In particular, our regulated nutrient and sediment load reductions, especially those within non-point sources;
  - Acknowledgement that our scientific understanding is continuously evolving and that our efforts need to constantly adapt accordingly; and
  - The fact that while each partner shares a common goal, we are all approaching this goal from different perspectives, challenges, and opportunities.
2. A simplified and streamlined structure and process for the partnership that supports all partners as they work toward achieving their commitments in an effective, efficient, and inclusive manner. It is the expectation of the Chesapeake Executive Council that the revised partnership structure and processes will be more inclusive of all communities and more manageable for partnership staff.

The Chesapeake Executive Council charges the Principals' Staff Committee with recommending this simplified and streamlined partnership structure and processes to the Chesapeake Executive Council in as much detail as possible by December 1, 2025. Subsequent changes that incorporate this revised structure and processes into the [Governance and Management Framework for the Chesapeake Bay Program](#) do not need to occur until June 2026.

Furthermore, we charge the Principals' Staff Committee to conduct the above actions through a transparent and inclusive process, consistent with the existing Governance and Management Framework, that engages not only representatives of our membership, but also the partnership's Advisory Committees, academic and non-profit partners, and the general public. The Chesapeake Executive Council recognizes that accomplishing the mandate of this charge will require significant collaboration and dedication of every partner's staff and financial resources to be successful.