

Chesapeake Executive Council

Statement in support of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice



CBP Vision from the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement

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 Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice

Just as natural ecosystems depend on biodiversity to thrive, the long-term success of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort depends on the equitable, just and inclusive engagement of all communities living throughout the watershed. This means to include a wide range of people of all races, ethnicities, income levels, faiths, genders, ages, sexual orientations and disabilities, along with other diverse groups, as well as promoting equal employment opportunities and expanding the diversity of the workforce and participants in restoration and conservation activities. For this effort to be successful it will require us to honor the culture, history and social concerns of local populations and communities.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners acknowledge that individually, each partner has established policies and programs with the goal of advancing environmental and public health protection for all. Through these programs, the seven Bay jurisdictions, EPA, other federal agencies, Chesapeake Bay Commission and partners are working to address and advance diversity and environmental justice issues. We also recognize that there is more we must do as a united partnership, and for this reason we explicitly and tangibly commit to diversity, equity, inclusion and environmental justice. Partners will continue to build on this work, sharing best practices, and with the acknowledgement that this work may indeed look different across the jurisdictions and space represented as a partnership, we will move forward together. Further, we recognize the importance of addressing racism and other forms of discrimination in our efforts, structures and acts of daily practices.

The impacts of discrimination and continuing environmental, economic and health disparities disproportionately burden underserved communities, including those of color, low-income status and indigenous populations. This limits access to clean water and air, fish, wildlife and outdoor recreation, and results in inequitable impacts on the human health and the surrounding environment for these communities. Disparities are only exacerbated by such environmental factors as climate change and pollution, and public health emergencies like the COVID -19 pandemic.

The Chesapeake Bay Program partners believe the full diversity of people who live, work and recreate in the Chesapeake Bay watershed have a right to benefit from, and help guide, the future of an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay watershed with clean water and air, abundant fish and wildlife, conserved lands, access to the water and a vibrant cultural heritage.

We reaffirm our commitment to embrace diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in all areas of the Chesapeake Bay Program to achieve our mission. As a partnership, we commit to:

- Strengthen and improve diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in our organizational structure, leadership, policies, strategic goals, restoration and conservation activities, workplans and program delivery, including guidance on including DEIJ and environmental justice criteria in grant targeting and evaluations.
- Engage, recruit and retain leadership, staff, appointees, interns and volunteers that reflect the diversity of people living within the Chesapeake Bay region.
- Foster a culture of inclusion, respect and mutual learning within the Chesapeake Bay Program by leading organizational change and empowering new voices and perspectives in our outreach, engagement and internal decision-making.
- Following consultation and coordination, determine how to best include federally recognized tribes in the Bay watershed in partnership activities.
- Develop long-term relationships, partnerships and increased collaborative planning with organizations led by and primarily serving communities of color and other underrepresented populations that result in informed and mutually beneficial decisions and outcomes.
- Ensure the benefits of our science, restoration and partnership programs are distributed in a fair and equitable manner without adverse, disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, especially those of lower economic status, indigenous, historically underrepresented communities and people of color.
- Continue to learn and share best practices as an organization in our evolving understanding of how best to promote diversity, equity, inclusion and justice.

AFFIRMATION

As Chesapeake Bay Program partners, we acknowledge that this Statement is voluntary and not a contract or an assistance agreement. We recognize the need to accelerate implementation of actions necessary to achieve the Goals and Outcomes outlined in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and realize our shared vision of a healthy, diverse and vibrant Chesapeake Bay watershed. We also understand that this Statement does not pre-empt, supersede or override any other law or regulation applicable to each signatory.

We, the undersigned members of the Chesapeake Executive Council, re-affirm our commitment to support the goals of the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement* and to work cooperatively in its implementation. Every citizen of this great watershed is invited to join with the partnership, uniting as a region and embracing the actions that will lead to success.

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION



Gene Yaw

FOR THE STATE OF DELAWARE



John C. Carney

FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA



Muriel Bowser

FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND



Wesley Young

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA



Tom Wolf

FOR THE STATE OF NEW YORK



Andrew Cuomo

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA



Glenn Roett

FOR THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA



Jim Justice

Andrew Kibbel

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
on behalf of the Federal Government and the
Federal Leadership Committee for the Chesapeake Bay
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Department of Transportation

