



Chesapeake Bay Program
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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June 19, 2012

RE: STAC Climate Change Workshop Report

Nicholas DiPasquale, Director, Chesapeake Bay Program
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21403

Cc: Management Board

Dear Mr. DiPasquale,

Please see the attached STAC workshop report entitled, "Adapting to Climate Change in the Chesapeake Bay: A STAC workshop to monitor progress in addressing climate change across the Chesapeake Bay Watershed." This report provides a summary of STAC's March, 2011 workshop. The report also includes a list of effective and practical management responses to climate change identified by workshop attendees. Attendees recommended the following:

1. Embed climate change in CBP decision-making

In early work, STAC emphasized the need for a singular lead or champion to support the consideration of climate change within CBP decision making. The participants affirmed this position, emphasizing that climate change must be someone's job. However, they balanced and complemented this perspective with the need to embed climate change across the organization and into a wide range of decisions.

2. Focus on solutions to specific problems

It is important for the conversation about climate change to move beyond potential impacts to specific strategies that can demonstrably reduce vulnerabilities, while, ideally, providing co-benefits. Workshop participants generally agreed with the importance of identifying specific solutions to tangible problems facing the Partnership.

3. Identify and prioritize vulnerabilities and opportunities for adaption

Climate is a pervasive driver of Chesapeake Bay processes and climate change has the potential to have far-reaching consequences. Yet, the notion that everything is "climate sensitive" and thus in need of reconsideration with respect to climate change can be paralyzing. The participants identified the need to clearly and systematically prioritize impacts based on criteria such as risk, vulnerability, and opportunity.

4. Build capacity

STAC and other CBP institutions can work to build capacity among professional staff to understand and address the consequences of changing climate conditions. Particular attention should be given to building the capacity for information collaboration across organizational and disciplinary boundaries. Capacity building efforts will ultimately provide the foundation for effective management responses.

5. Research priorities

The research community can help reduce barriers to more sophisticated consideration of climate and improve long-term outcomes with coordinated programs of work. Specific areas of opportunity identified by participants included:

Reducing uncertainties while recognizing the need to take action in the face of uncertainty;

Calibrating the estuarine model with newer climate data;

Identifying essential connections between the estuary and watershed models; and

Understanding social science and communications perspectives

As always, STAC's advisory reports are meant to seed conversation amongst Chesapeake Bay Program partners and between those partners and our region's scientists. Adapting our institutions and programs to the realities of our changing climate will take many conversations over many years. As a second step in this initial conversation, STAC requests a responsive letter from the Chesapeake bay Program's Management Board that addresses each of the above recommendations (please see more detailed description of each recommendation in the report), and offers suggested ways the Program and its partners can work together with the scientific community to institutionalize climate change. STAC understands that this response will require significant consideration by the Management Board. As such, STAC requests the Management Board consider the above recommendations over the next few months and provide STAC a response by October 1, 2012. As part of this response, STAC invites the Management Board's suggestions for additional work on these issues, including opportunities to support or collaborate with on-going work within state and federal agencies.

On behalf of the workshop steering committee and the entire STAC, thank you again for considering these recommended next steps, and we look forward to working with you closely in the future.

Sincerely,



Chris Pyke

Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee