

# THE BAY BEYOND 2025

Update on Comments and Next Steps



**Chesapeake Bay Program**

*Science. Restoration. Partnership.*

# AGENDA

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**Quick Recap**

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**Comment Timeline and Results**

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**Deeper Dive**

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**Next Steps**

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**Questions**

# QUICK RECAP

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Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership  
Executive Council Charge to the Principals' Staff Committee: Charting a Course to 2025 and Beyond  
Adopted October 11, 2022

As the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) partnership nears the 2025 date that the partnership set for several of the goals and outcomes under the *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Watershed Agreement)*, there are many successes to celebrate. At the same time, emerging issues and changing conditions (e.g., climate change, growth, new scientific data) have impacted the levels of effort needed to meet our collective restoration priorities. We, as a partnership, remain committed to using the best available science in restoring the Chesapeake Bay as we accelerate toward the deadline and anticipate continued progress post-2025.

Thus, this Executive Council charges the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) in recommending a critical path forward that prioritizes and outlines the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement* leading up to and beyond 2025. The PSC is to report back to the Executive Council at our 2023 annual meeting with recommendations on how to best address and integrate new science and restoration strategies leading up to 2025. At our 2024 annual meeting, the PSC is to prepare recommendations that continue to address new advances in science and restoration, along with a focus on our partnership for going beyond 2025.

In undertaking such a process, the PSC should address the following considerations:

**Science**

- Identify new and emerging scientific data and studies which could modify our progress reporting and adaptive management approach, as well as the goals and outcomes under the *Watershed Agreement*.
- Enhance our monitoring and reporting capabilities to improve our understanding of existing conditions and trends.
- Define the existing and emerging challenges (e.g., climate change conditions, increasing growth, diversity, equity, inclusion and justice considerations) to accomplishing the partnership's work under the *Watershed Agreement*, and how addressing those challenges might alter our collective restoration priorities, including the possibility of extending the target date for completing restoration of water quality beyond 2025.
- Identify opportunities to leverage action across multiple goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement*.

**Restoration**

- Develop and begin to implement a communication strategy that identifies key partnership successes, associated ecosystem improvements and areas where more effort is needed.
- Provide snapshots of outcome attainability under the Agreement (e.g., which outcomes are likely to be met by the date(s) set by the partnership, which won't, and why) and options for communicating these snapshots to demonstrate progress in achieving our outcomes and the remaining work to be done, including gaps to be addressed.

**Partnership**

- Focus on moving beyond 2025 by seeking ways in which restoration can be relevant to all communities within the watershed.
- Assess the overall partnership to determine whether we
  - Are effectively hearing from and listening to all stakeholders, and
  - Have systems of evaluation and decision-making to enable meaningful action and allocation of partnership resources.
- Based on this assessment, develop recommendations for potential improvement.

## CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL CHARGE

Adopted by the Executive Council in October 2022, the charge directs the Principals' Staff Committee to **recommend a critical path forward** that prioritizes and outlines the next steps for meeting the goals and outcomes of the *Watershed Agreement* **beyond 2025.**



## WHAT IS BEYOND 2025?

The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee advises on the development of recommendations to meet the Chesapeake Executive Council charge on charting a course beyond 2025.

# WHO IS REPRESENTED ON THE STEERING COMMITTEE?

- Chesapeake Bay Commission
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
- U.S. Forest Service
- U.S. Geological Survey
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service
- National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
- Representatives from the six Goal Implementation Teams
- Stakeholders' Advisory Committee
- Local Government Advisory Committee
- Science and Technical Advisory Committee
- Maryland
- Virginia
- Pennsylvania
- Delaware
- New York
- District of Columbia
- West Virginia
- Two non-voting members (Chesapeake Bay Trust and Choose Clean Water Coalition)

# TWO PHASES...

## **Phase One:**

By the end of 2024,  
determine the scope and  
breadth of what should be  
undertaken.

## **Phase Two:**

Beginning in 2025,  
implement the plan!

# OUR AIM...

- Provide recommendations for the Executive Council that speak to:
  - What we do—the goals and outcomes of the ***Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement***.
  - How we work together—the structure of the **Chesapeake Bay Program partnership**.



# FEEDBACK TIMELINE AND RESULTS

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# PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS RECAP



60-day public feedback period: July 1—August 30, 2024.



Comments were submitted to [comments@chesapeakebay.net](mailto:comments@chesapeakebay.net) (or mine and Jake Solyst's inboxes).



All raw comments now available at [chesapeakebay.net/beyond2025](https://chesapeakebay.net/beyond2025).



A red-lined version of the report will be posted at the same location when available.



Five person drafting team are reviewing all comments and recommending edits to the recommendations report.

# COMMENT STATISTICS

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81 total commenters

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538 unique comments

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1,814 individual emails from Chesapeake Bay Foundation supporters in response to an action alert

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82 individual emails from Waterkeepers Chesapeake supporters in response to an action alert

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# WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?



Majority of feedback was out-of-scope or will be held for Phase 2.



Revisions to the Watershed Agreement should be completed by the end of 2025.

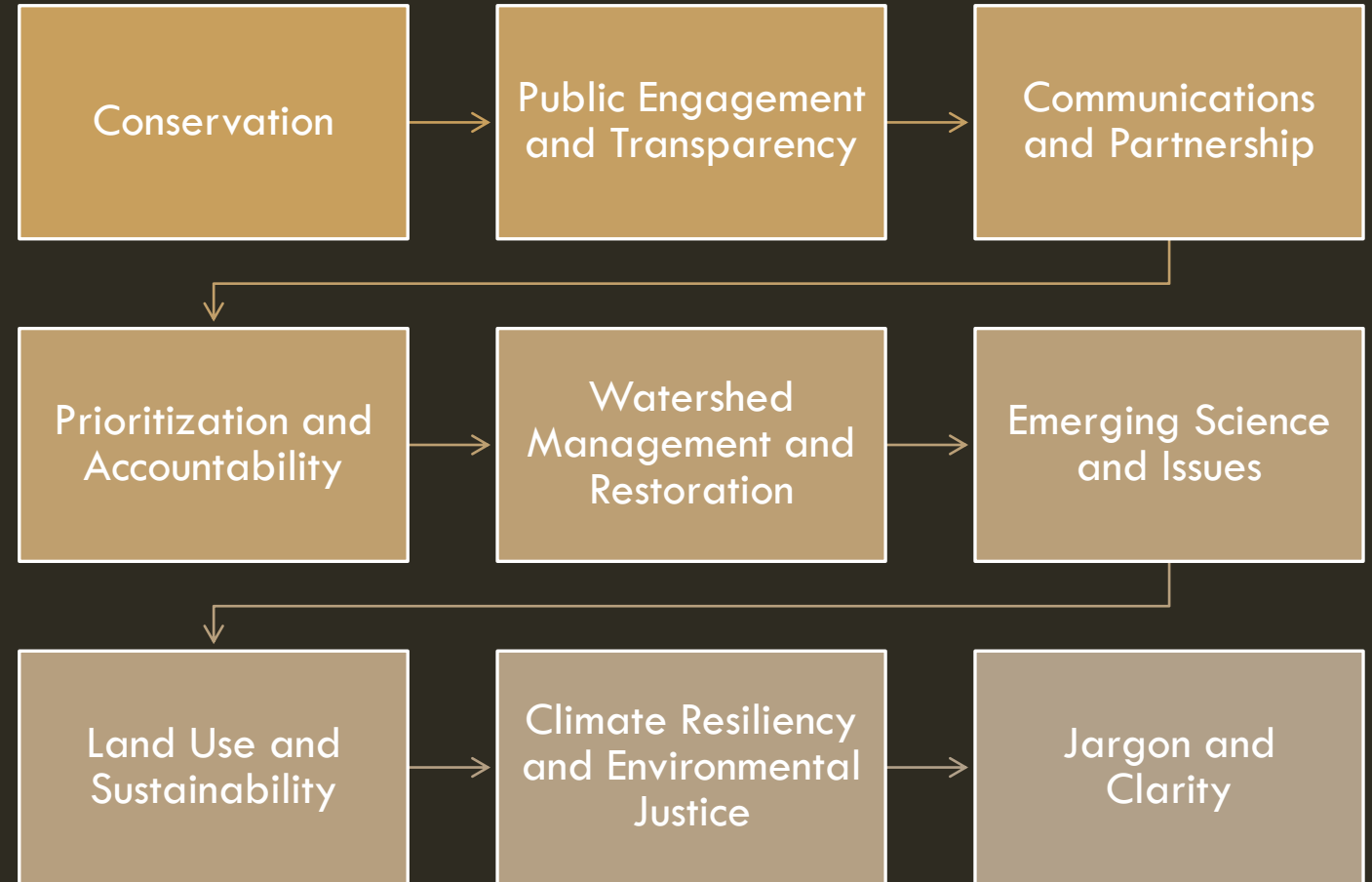


All Executive Council members should reaffirm their commitment to the partnership at the 2024 Executive Council meeting.



Greater emphasis on conservation, climate change implications, recommendations from the CESR report and involving diverse and underserved populations in the partnership's work.

# COMMON THEMES



# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION #1

The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommends that the Chesapeake Executive Council affirm its continued commitment to meet the goals of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and direct the Principals' Staff Committee to propose specific amendments necessary to effectively implement the Watershed Agreement.

## Areas of Support

- **Continued commitment to the 2014 Agreement**
- **Inclusive and holistic approach**
- **Support for addressing climate change and other emerging issues**
- **Strengthening the processes for evidence building (social science, monitoring needs, and measuring progress)**
- **Acknowledging the Beyond 2025 effort and challenge at hand.**

**FEEDBACK ON EC  
RECOMMENDATION  
#1**



## Areas of Concern

- **Vagueness** in recommendations
- Challenged to comment given a lack of observable **priority of objectives.**
- Lack of focus on **accountability mechanisms.**

FEEDBACK ON EC  
RECOMMENDATION  
#1

**EXECUTIVE  
COUNCIL  
RECOMMENDATION  
#2**

The Beyond 2025 Steering Committee recommends strengthening the Chesapeake Bay Program by identifying ways to simplify and streamline the partnership's structure and processes, including potential changes to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Governance and Management Framework to ensure that partner commitments can be met.

# FEEDBACK ON EC RECOMMENDATION #2

## Areas of Support

- **Simplification** of Structure and Processes
- Revising and Strengthening **Accountability**
- **Equity and Inclusivity**
- **Robust monitoring and data integration** to inform decision-making
- Focus on **living resources and healthy communities**

# FEEDBACK ON EC RECOMMENDATION #2

## Areas of Concern

- Call for **more detailed specifics** of “simplification” and concern of **unintended consequences** of simplification.
- Acknowledge **tension** between addressing climate change, emerging issues and, **efforts to streamline**.

# NEXT STEPS

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# TIMELINE FOR REPORT REVIEW AND DELIVERY

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September	SC reviews feedback and revises report
Sept 17	Update to PSC, guidance from PSC
Sept 20	Proposed changes will be emailed to Steering Committee
Sept 24	“Showstopper” edits due back to Drafting Team
Sept 26	SC consensus on final report
Oct 2	Optional virtual briefing for on final report
Early October	PSC makes any necessary edits to report & drafts EC Action
Oct 10	MB Meeting – decision point for submitting B25 Report to PSC
Oct 25	PSC approves EC Action & submission of report to EC
Dec 10	EC Meeting, EC approval of Action

# QUESTIONS?

Thank you!

Rachel Felver

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