



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

May 4, 2022

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20250

RE: Support for the Chesapeake Resilient Farms Initiative

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We are writing on behalf of the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) and the Food and Agriculture Regional Member Policy Committee (FARM) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) to express our committees' support for a proposed USDA Chesapeake Resilient Farms Initiative (CRFI) through the provision of \$737 million in dedicated funding over the next ten years. Although metropolitan Washington contains large urban areas, agriculture is an important part of the region's economy. The agriculture sector is also vital to efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay by providing the most cost-effective opportunities for reducing nutrient and sediment pollution under the Bay's Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL).

COG recently recommended to EPA Region 3 Administrator Adam Ortiz that the agency target anticipated new funding from the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to Pennsylvania's agriculture sector to implement nutrient and sediment control practices. But more funding is needed for Pennsylvania to meet its pollution reduction goals by 2025 under the Bay TMDL. Funding the CRFI at the level recommended by the Chesapeake Bay Commission, alongside new resources from the infrastructure bill, would go a long way toward meeting this highly ambitious target.

COG adds its voice to the many other state and local government entities, as well as non-governmental organizations, that support the CRFI. Thank you for your consideration of this initiative and we look forward to its timely inception.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Amy B. Jackson in cursive.

Amy Jackson
Chair, Chesapeake Bay and Water
Resources Policy Committee

Handwritten signature of Mary Cheh in cursive.

Mary Cheh
Chair, Food and Agriculture Regional
Member Policy Committee

cc: Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, The Honorable Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh
Farm Production & Conservation Under Secretary, The Honorable Robert Bonnie