

CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM AND WATER RESOURCES UPDATES MAY 2020

Chesapeake Bay Program

Status of Including Climate Change Impacts under the Chesapeake Bay TMDL

Issue: How to incorporate the effects of climate change into the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort

- The effects of climate change on precipitation, wind patterns and temperature have not yet been officially incorporated into the Bay Program's modelled estimates of the impact of BMPs and other restoration actions on water quality.
- Those effects are, on balance, predicted to be negative; that is, they lead to lower dissolved oxygen levels in the Bay, the key driver of the level of nutrient and sediment reduction required by the Bay's Total Maximum Daily Load.
- Several Bay Partner jurisdictions, including Virginia and the District of Columbia, chose to include preliminary estimates of climate change impact in their Phase III Watershed Implementation plans (WIPs) in 2018.
- The Bay Program has since updated its suite of models to provide a better estimate of climate change impact. The partners have agreed to incorporate those numbers into their WIPs in 2021.

What Will Be the Impact?

The increased level of effort (LoE) required to offset the predicted negative impact of climate change on dissolved oxygen levels in the Bay will depend on how the partners choose to interpret the climate mandate and how the additional reductions are allocated among the jurisdictions.

- In Maryland, these policy choices translate into a range of additional reduction amounts from 11 – 61 percent increase in the nitrogen LoE (11 – 36 percent under the options most likely to be chosen).
- In Virginia: a 15 - 77 percent increase in the nitrogen LoE (15 – 42 percent in the most likely options). *(Note: the Virginia WIP already included an increased LoE for the preliminary estimate of climate change impact: about 25 percent for nitrogen.)*
- Like Virginia, the District of Columbia already incorporated the preliminary estimate of climate change impact in its WIP. Although the District's 2017 progress run already meets its 2025 planning target, additional reductions from non-wastewater sources are needed to address climate due to expected growth in the wastewater sector by 2025

When Will the Decision Be Made?

The current schedule calls for the Bay Program's Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) to make a final decision among the various climate change policy options, including the date by which any reductions must be accomplished, by late 2020 or early 2021

How Can COG Make Its Views Known?

COG does not have a seat on the PSC, although the District of Columbia does. COG's September Bay Forum, assuming it is held, would provide an opportunity for members to engage with the Maryland and Virginia PSC members or their delegates. Staff recommends that COG develop a policy on the date by which additional nutrient reductions due to climate change must be accomplished and the implications for wastewater cap loads.

Local Water Quality

COG's DEP has developed an interactive map of the Major Watersheds in the COG Region

<https://mwcog.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=0ca1efb4efeb4d81bca4e94ab045d1af>

Your feedback is welcome on other information to include in the popup windows of future maps. Please send your comments to Heidi Bonnaffon, hbonnaffon@mwcog.org

Conservation Advocacy for HOAs 101: Online workshop June 17th

The Audubon Naturalist Society is holding a “how to” webinar for working with and within your Homeowner Association to improve environmental stewardship.

<https://tinyurl.com/y88ul7ou>

The Anacostia Partnership has recently released a storymap of the SAV rebound for the Anacostia.

View it here: <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/a8db9238e4e549beaa9e0b23d612f118>

Federal Regulation

EPA has released its final rule regarding “waters of the U. S.

See: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/04/21/2020-02500/the-navigable-waters-protection-rule-definition-of-waters-of-the-united-states>

Drinking Water and Storm Water

Virginia Stormwater Local Assistance Fund (SLAF) Update

DEQ has received authorization to continue pending and previously authorized FY '19 SLAF agreements. DEQ announcements of FY '20 SLAF funding recipients have been delayed and are still on hold. The FY2021-2022 State Budget SLAF Appropriation of \$50 Million remains in the governor's budget, for now, with further appropriation decisions for capital projects expected later this fall.

Virginia's Plastic Bag Bills (HB 534 (Carr) and SB 11 (Ebbin)) were signed by Governor Northam

These plastic bag bills, which were supported by the CBPC, allow localities to impose a five-cent tax on plastic bags, with proceeds to be used by the locality for environmental cleanup, environmental education or providing reusable bags to recipients of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or Women, Infants, and Children Program (WIC) benefits.

Summary of Current Water Supply and Drought Conditions (As May 7, 2020)

- U.S. Drought Monitor – Normal
 - The latest U.S. Drought monitor released on May 7 indicates that drought conditions do not exist in the COG region.
- Drought Stage - Normal
 - The current drought stage as defined in [COG's water supply and drought response awareness plan \(the Plan\)](#) is NORMAL. COG's Plan focuses on tracking and responding to drought conditions as it relates to regional water supply.
- Drought Stages from VADEQ and MDE - Normal
 - COG jurisdictions that are also monitored by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality ([VADEQ](#)) and Maryland Department of the Environment ([MDE](#)) are under a normal status.

- Streamflow, groundwater, and reservoir levels – Above Normal
 - Potomac streamflow levels are currently above median levels and local reservoirs remain full. Most of the regional groundwater wells monitored are near normal levels.
- Forecasts – Normal
 - The latest U.S. Seasonal Outlook indicates drought is not likely in the COG region over the next three months.

Food and Agriculture

Regional Emergency Food Assistance Directory [available](#).

COG's Regional Food System Program is convening weekly calls with key stakeholders to share information on food security issues across jurisdictions and to inform our COVID-19 situational awareness. Additional local government or other key contacts who are actively engaged in coordinating local responses to address food and nutrition needs are welcome. To date, we've had participation from food policy council directors, several elected officials, key local government staff, major emergency food assistance providers, policy experts, and others. The next call is Thursday, May 14th and will feature presentations from Prince William and Montgomery County on their emergency food task force efforts. Please contact Lindsay Smith for more information: lsmith@mwkog.org

At a recent Region Forward Coalition meeting, there was a lot of discussion about food in remarks made by our region's elected officials. This included information on the Coalition for a Hunger Free Arlington. Link to all presentations: <https://www.mwkog.org/events/2020/4/24/region-forward-coalition/>

Upcoming CBPC Meetings and Events

- Planning Webinar June 12, 2020
- Webinar July 17, 2020
- Forum with EPA and states September 25 (tentatively)

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