

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

Chesapeake Bay & Water Resources Policy Committee

A Look Back on Policy, Partnership, Promotion, and Outreach



Metropolitan Washington
Council of Governments

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

December 30, 2021

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The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) is an independent, nonprofit association that brings area leaders together to address major regional issues in the District of Columbia, suburban Maryland, and Northern Virginia. COG's membership is comprised of 300 elected officials from 24 local governments, the Maryland and Virginia state legislatures, and U.S. Congress.

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CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

CBPC Background & Vision

Clean, safe water is fundamental to life, to public health, and the economy. Few services are more important than reliable delivery of high-quality drinking water; collecting wastewater from homes and businesses and transforming it into clean water; and managing stormwater runoff to mitigate flooding and reduce pollution.

The Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments' (COG) Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) is comprised of elected officials, and area government and water utility management. The CBPC was established in 1998 to improve water quality in regional streams, the Potomac and Anacostia Rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay. The CBPC tracks federal and state legislation and decisions that affect local governments and makes water policy recommendations to the COG Board.

The CBPC committee addresses regional water quality issues in these focus areas:

- Representing the region's technical and policy interests to the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Chesapeake Bay Agreement signatory jurisdictions, providing a voice for local perspectives.
- Taking policy positions and actions that align with the COG Board's Legislative Priorities.
- Tracking emerging issues, evolving science, and regulations related to water quality, wastewater, stormwater, and drinking water; and collaborating on best management practices.
- Public outreach and advocacy about Bay restoration progress and local/regional water quality issues. An example is Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week.



CBPC 2021 Accomplishments:

- ✓ **Wrote letters of support for Maryland General Assembly bills, and to Congress urging infrastructure funding for water programs, and in support of the feasibility study for creating the Travilah reservoir.**
- ✓ **Members messaged on social media for Earth Day and Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week**
- ✓ **Focus was on Climate Resiliency including a joint meeting with CEEPC, where presenters briefed members on resiliency funding opportunities.**
- ✓ **The CBPC held its 10th Annual Forum with EPA and States.**

Accomplishments

In 2021, the CBPC celebrated many accomplishments in the areas of Policy, Partnership, and Promotion & Outreach.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The CBPC wrote letters advocating for infrastructure investments. Members also wrote letters in support of state legislation that supported climate resiliency, tree canopy, green businesses, and funding for stormwater.

- Wrote to Congress in June urging sustained bipartisan support for water infrastructure funding and support.
- Wrote a letter of support for ICPRB, in favor of their proposed feasibility study for Travilah quarry (Montgomery County, MD) to become a reservoir. This would support drinking water resiliency by providing an alternate source of drinking water to millions, if the Potomac River source became compromised.
- The CBPC supported the following Maryland General Assembly bills:
 - MD HB 561: Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard
 - MD HB 61: Statewide Green Business Certification Program
 - MD HB 77: Safer Sealant Act of 2021.
 - MD HB 295: Stormwater Management Regulations

PARTNERSHIPS

Members Held an Engaging Annual Forum with States

On September 17, 2021 the CBPC met with officials from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State of Maryland, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the District of Columbia to discuss priorities for water quality, including the need for climate resilience and to double down on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) efforts.



(Microsoft Teams screenshot, Heidi Bonnaffon, COG Staff)

Chesapeake Bay Foundation Potomac Tour

On October 15, eight members of the CBPC went on a Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) tour of the Potomac where they trawled for fish species, compared water quality between the Blue Plains wastewater outfall and the mainstem of the Potomac River, and learned more about Alexandria's investments to reengineer to address their combined sewer overflow issue. CBF also shared their legislative priorities.



(Heidi Bonnaffon, COG staff)



(Heidi Bonnaffon, COG staff)

WRTC's Recommended Stream Restoration Best Practices Report

This report was developed by the Water Resources Technical Committee stream restoration work group and collaborators and was presented to the CBPC in November 2021. Geared toward regional stormwater technicians, the report summarizes best practices for selecting, installing and maintaining stream restoration projects.



PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

Earth Month

CBPC Chair Laurie-Anne Sayles joined COG Air and Climate Public Advisory Committee Chair Guillermo Ortiz, and COG Food and Agriculture Regional Member (FARM) Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Chair Mary Cheh to participate in a video campaign encouraging residents to prioritize improving our environment and communities while exploring the outdoors during the month of April.

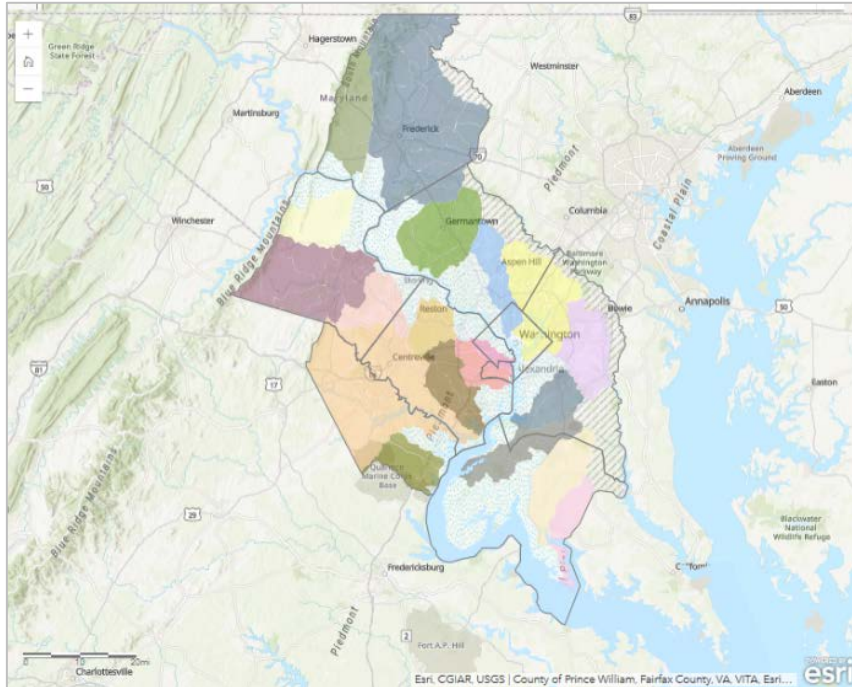


The CBPC celebrated Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week virtually, with a focus on recreation in the metropolitan Washington region:

- Proclamations by Councils and utilities
- The greatest breadth of social media posts in the Bay Watershed
- Press release: Celebrate all of the recreational opportunities the Chesapeake Bay watershed offers

Updated Interactive Map of the COG Watersheds

This year, COG updated its interactive map showing the major watersheds of metropolitan Washington that drain into the Potomac or Patuxent rivers. It now has more detail at a sub-watershed scale and percent impervious cover.



View the Map: [Major Watersheds of the Region](#)

Community Engagement Campaign's (CEC) Water and Wastewater Survey

This CEC annual survey gives the region's water and wastewater utilities important insights about the public's understanding of their water and wastewater services. The findings also help water utilities in the region shape the way they communicate with customers about the important work water utilities do to ensure these life-sustaining services.

Read the findings in this COG Press Release: [Survey gauges residents' awareness about their water](#)

Winter Salts

The CEC and the CBPC shared winter salts messaging, encouraging residents to be #WinterSaltSmart.

Be Winter Salt Smart!

USE LESS

More salt does not mean more melting. A 12-ounce mug of salt should be enough for a 20-foot driveway or about 10 sidewalk squares.

#WinterSaltSmart

Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments

CBPC PRIORITIES FOR 2022

In the year ahead, the CBPC, in concert with the Water Resources Technical Committee (WRTC), will continue addressing water policies, strengthening partnerships, and promoting the region's work to improve the water quality of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. All areas of work will be viewed through a diversity, equity, and inclusion lens.

POLICY

- The CBPC will continue to track and take positions on Virginia and Maryland General Assembly bills per COG's 2022 Legislative Priorities.
- The committee will also communicate with federal and state partners to ensure Infrastructure Investment funds, Jobs Act funds, and other federal funding are available to local governments and water utilities for their critical needs.

PARTNERSHIPS

- The CBPC will partner with Academic institutions to foster the CBPC's Paper Competition.
- The committee will convene the CBPC Annual Forum to continue fostering relationships with federal and state water quality partners.
- In addition, the committee will work to strengthen partnerships that enhance the pipeline of qualified applicants for water workforce job openings.

PROMOTION AND OUTREACH

- The CBPC will participate in Chesapeake Bay Awareness Week activities, June 2022, to shine a light on the Chesapeake Bay and the region's local water ways, as it has for the past six years.
- The CBPC will partner with the region's water utilities via the Community Engagement Campaign to continue public education about winter salts, infrastructure investments, and protecting household plumbing from fats, oils, grease and wipes.