

CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE WEBINAR SUMMARY-DRAFT

September 17, 2021

LINK TO ALL MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2021/9/17/chesapeake-bay-and-water-resources-policy-committee/>

DECISIONS & ACTIONS:

Forum:

- Continue to fund and focus on climate resiliency, including how the precipitation intensity, duration, frequency curves will shape stormwater design standards.
- Continue to meet annually, and in the interim, share resources and collaborate regionally on climate resiliency and water workforce development issues and opportunities.
- COG shared highlights from the Forum on social media:
<https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2021/10/07/at-forum-participants-highlight-importance-of-local-role-in-bay-restoration/>

1. CHAIR'S WELCOME

Laurie-Anne Sayles, CBPC Chair

2. FORUM WITH EPA & STATES

Michelle Price-Fay, EPA Chesapeake Bay Program Acting Director

Cathy Libertz, EPA Region 3 Water Division Director

Ann Jennings, Virginia Deputy Secretary of Natural & Historic Resources for the Chesapeake Bay

Benjamin Grumbles, Maryland Department of Environment Secretary

Tommy Wells, District Department of Energy and the Environment Director

COG's News Highlight: <https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2021/10/07/at-forum-participants-highlight-importance-of-local-role-in-bay-restoration/>

Member discussion:

- Chair Sayles asked the invited guests for any examples of regional partnerships across borders. Mr. Wells said the Anacostia Partnership has been very successful. Eighty percent of the Anacostia River is in the District of Columbia, but 80% of the Anacostia watershed is in Prince George's and Montgomery Counties. The Partnership is comprised of these local governments as well as federal partners. More about the regional Anacostia River partnership here <https://anacostia.net> and here <https://restoretheanacostiariver.com/>
- Supervisor Gross commented that flooding is an ongoing issue that needs more funding. She requested more details about the Community Flood Preparedness Fund which Deputy Secretary Jennings mentioned: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/dam-safety-and-floodplains/dsfpm-cfpf>
She added that she hoped we do not lose track of grey infrastructure with the emphasis on green infrastructure. There is a place for both. The regulatory process and permitting takes a long time, which is challenge when we want to engage the public.
- Ms. Moore thanked Secretary Grumbles for his leadership on climate and energy and asked him to say more about flooding resiliency. Secretary Grumbles responded that engaging more with the public is very important; we can use tools such as Zoom to do so. He cited funding resources such as the FEMA BRIC Program, and the Resiliency Authorities, Maryland established through the General Assembly, which can obtain bonds. Maryland has been

using metrics for tracking its greenhouse goal of 50% reduction by 2030 but would like to develop metrics for tracking resiliency progress as well (e.g., loss of power, heat impacts, etc.), so Maryland can be "Half as dirty, twice as sturdy."

- Councilmember Dyballa echoed the importance of focusing on the intersection of climate, stormwater, and flooding. She would like to share the recently revised climate and water infrastructure related policies developed by the National League of Cities (NLC) Advocacy Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources with our invited speakers. The NLC is also interested in PFAS. In Maryland there was a new state law about updating stormwater standards to address flooding, so requested an update and what is being done regarding outreach. Secretary Grumbles responded that they are still working to update precipitation models to integrate them for stormwater standards in a way that is legally defensible. More to come, and there is more information on the MDE website.
- Councilmember Garvey stated that it is heartening that everyone cares about these issues, but the issues are a challenge. We want science based, but the science and the models need continuous updating, so we need two things—flexibility and communication—which this Forum is about.
- Secretary Grumbles raised the point about the water utility “grey tsunami” of retirements and the need for apprenticeship programs for young people to be exposed to water sector jobs. Mr. Wells said we need an equity and inclusion overlay in hiring for these positions, and there are good jobs in green infrastructure. He gave kudos for DC Water’s successful apprenticeship program. Mr. Reis shared this link for more information about apprenticeships: <https://ngicp.org/>
- Ms. Price-Fay said the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP) has benefited from the Partnership, and community involvement and inclusion. The Principal Staff Committee directed the CBP to broaden the CBP’s diversity and inclusion and to create a DEIJ action plan to reach underrepresented communities. The National Park Service recently gave a presentation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission about engaging urban youth. The additional federal infrastructure funding (\$1.25 M) is going to be focused on underrepresented communities.
- Ms. Libertz shared an EPA resource for water workforce development—case studies for recruitment, retention, and training in water and wastewater : <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/water-sector-workforce> There is a need for workforce depth.
- Chair Sayles mentioned the CBPC’s Paper Competition; one of its goals engage with young people—high school and college—to engage them in water issues.
- Mr. Ortiz said that Montgomery County is examining where to install future stormwater best management practices, and decisions will utilize a socioeconomic and diversity indicator tool. He also appreciated the resilience focus and the echoed the need for updating models. However, storms are unpredictable and there are microevents that defy prediction based on flood plains; for example, there recently was loss of life in a Montgomery County basement flooding situation. Secretary Grumbles agreed that the 100-year flood plain is a misnomer that we should not use.
- Ms. Crooms, Acting Director for Prince George’s County Dept. of Environment, said she is interested in resources to remove climate jargon. While these terms are natural for environmental practitioners, they are not clear for broader residents. Supervisor Gross mentioned the Water Words That Work where Mr. Eckl translated water words into lay terms (Ms. Bonnaffon previously emailed the Water Words that Work presentation).
- Councilmember Davis stated that basement apartments with no feasible exits should not be allowed. There is a need to revisit building codes and permitting for below ground apartments.

3. CBPC MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

The draft summary of the July 2021 CBPC meeting was approved.

4. MEMBER AND STAFF UPDATES

A. Staff Updates

- Ms. Bonnaffon announced the October 15th Chesapeake Bay Foundation (CBF) Boat Tour of the Potomac. It is geared for decision makers: the CBF sees our CBPC members as decision makers. The tour will cover fish trawling, stormwater, the Blue Plains outfall, and a policy pre-view. She provided a registration form after the meeting.
- Mr. Bieber provided context about the ICPRB Travilah quarry feasibility study, since the CBPC wrote a letter of support. Nearly 80% of COG population relies on the Potomac River for its drinking water, in particular the District of Columbia and Arlington County. COG has been working with ICPRB to improve drinking water resiliency (e.g., to drought or contamination (a.k.a., low probably, but high-risk events)) via more off-river storage of water. The focus has been on converting unused quarries which could supply up to 30 days water supply. Travilah quarry is in Montgomery County, Maryland. ICPRB is seeking Congressional support. Once approved, it could take up to a decade to convert the quarry to a reservoir. If there is committee interest ICPRB could provide a future update.

Member discussion:

- Supervisor Gross requested a cost documentation disclosure for the boat tour, to meet the states' reporting threshold.
- Members discussed and agreed with requiring masks and vaccinations of anyone going on the boat tour.
- Councilmember Garvey mentioned Loudoun County's quarry. She has heard that more rain, and in the long run, more drought is possible with climate change, so she agreed that building cisterns and using quarries to capture the rain seems like a good idea.
- Mr. Bieber said both Loudoun Water and Fairfax Water have quarry agreements in place, and Fairfax Water has improved its capability to move water around between its systems through system interconnections.
- Mr. Seltzer is chair of ICPRB's co-op section. He said if there were an issue with the Potomac River, there is only one day's storage in the District of Columbia, and parts of Maryland only has days. This poses a significant issue in terms of safety—fighting fires, hospitals, etc. The Travilah quarry project is \$800 Million cost, and it should be supported by the federal government as a national security and defense issue. He encouraged members to ask state officials for this support where possible. He reinforced that seasonally we are getting more rain fall on average, but there is an opportunity for more deep droughts as well.

5. ADJOURN MEETING

Laurie-Anne Sayles, CBPC Chair, adjourned the webinar at noon.

ATTENDANCE

Members and Alternates:

Amy Jackson, Vice Chair, Alexandria
Cindy Dyballa, City of Takoma Park
J. Davis, City of Greenbelt
Jon Stehle, City of Fairfax
Kate Kennedy, City of College Park

Laurie-Anne Sayles, Chair, City of Gaithersburg
Libby Garvey, Arlington County
Maria Mackie, City of College Park
MC Keegan-Ayer, Frederick County
Thomas Ross, City of Fairfax

Adam Ortiz, Montgomery County DEP
Allison Deines, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Beth Forbes, Gaithersburg
Heather Gewandter, City of Rockville
Jason Papacosma, Arlington County
Jesse Maines, City of Alexandria
Joel Caudill, WSSC Water
Karen Pallansch, Alexandria Renew Enterprises
Mark Peterson, Loudoun Water
Matt Reis, DC Water
Michelle Russell, Prince George's County DEP
Nasser Kamazani, Montgomery County DEP
Nora Jackson, NVRC
Norm Goulet, NVRC
Pam Kennel, Loudoun Water
Patty Bubar, Montgomery County DEP
Shannon Moore, Frederick County DEP
Steve Shofar, Montgomery County DEP
Tiffany Wright, City of Bowie

Guests:

Ann Jennings, Virginia Governor's Office
Benjamin Grumbles, MDE
Bill Pugh
Bryant Thomas, VA DEQ
Cathy Libertz, EPA Region 3
James Martin, VA DEQ
Lee Currey, MDE
Kathie Hoekstra
Michelle Price-Fay, EPA CBP
Tommy Wells, DOEE
Thomas Damm, EPA

COG Staff:

Ata Adeel
Christine Howard
Heidi Bonnaffon
Karl Berger
Katie Dyer
Lisa Reynolds
Steve Bieber