



CHESAPEAKE BAY AND WATER RESOURCES POLICY COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary-DRAFT

November 15, 2023

LINK TO ALL MEETING PRESENTATIONS AND MATERIALS:

<https://www.mwcog.org/events/2024/11/15/chesapeake-bay-and-water-resources-policy-committee/>

1. WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Chair Fani-Gonzalez welcomed members and asked them to introduce themselves.

2. MEETING SUMMARY APPROVAL

The September 2024 meeting summary was approved.

3. LOCAL LEADERSHIP SURVEY FINDINGS AND FIGURES

Rick Mittler, Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay

Mr. Mittler presented the results of the 2024 Local Leadership Survey received which received 200 survey responses from across the watershed. The survey data will continue to help build on the Local Leadership Workgroup's (LLWG) understanding of the knowledge and capacity of local officials while allowing them to improve and enhance the training and information LLWG provides so it best supports local governments.

The survey highlighted the importance of local leadership in watershed resource management. Key findings included:

- Respondents from larger communities (100,000+ residents) had the most correct answers.
- Half of the respondents were unsure if they were subject to the Chesapeake Bay Pollutant Reduction Plan.
- Local officials from smaller towns (3,000 or fewer residents) were less likely to know of a knowledgeable person to consult.
- The survey indicated a need for technical assistance, especially for smaller communities.
- The Workgroup plans to use the survey data to tailor resources and support local governments better.

4. FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Ryan Losak, Banner Public Affairs

Ryan Losak from Banner Public Affairs provided a federal legislative update on the work Congress is trying to complete in the lame duck session before the end of the year, including appropriations, WRDA, and other relevant legislation. He also provided a look ahead at what we can expect heading into a new year and new Congress in 2025.

Federal Legislative Update:

- EPA Leadership- Former New York Congressman Lee Zeldin has been appointed to lead the EPA, despite his limited background in environmental issues.
- Regulatory Rollbacks- Mr. Losak discussed the potential rollback of regulations under the new administration, including the lead and copper rule improvements and PFAS



regulations.

- Policy Directions- Zeldin's appointment signals a shift towards scaled-back regulatory oversight, with a focus on reducing what the administration views as burdensome regulations.

Congressional Priorities and Appropriations:

- Appropriations Bill- Mr. Losak noted that the appropriations bill is set to expire on December 20th, with uncertainty about whether it will be extended or pushed into the next year.
- Farm Bill- Mr. Losak mentioned that the farm bill, which has been overdue for reauthorization, is likely to be pushed into the next year due to ongoing negotiations.

Reconciliation Process and Policy Priorities:

- Mr. Losak addressed the potential for the reconciliation process to be used for tax and energy policies, and the possibility of expanding its scope to include other policy priorities.

Pipeline Projects and Nuclear Energy

- Mr. Losak predicted an increase in pipeline projects and a focus on small modular reactors for nuclear energy under the new administration.

Transportation and Transit Outlook:

- Mr. Losak noted the uncertainty about the new Transportation Secretary and the potential influence of Elon Musk on transportation and transit policies.

5. MD/VA GENERAL ASSEMBLY LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Lisa Ochsenhirt, Aqua Law

Ms. Ochsenhirt presented on environmental topics that may be seen in the upcoming 2025 Maryland and Virginia General Assembly, including legislation on drinking water, PFAS, and stream restoration. She also commented on the status of state and federal budgets and the potential impacts budget negotiations may have on legislative priorities. She also shared recent information on Maryland and Virginia permitting efforts in both the stormwater and wastewater sectors.

In the Maryland General Assembly key topics included:

- Environmental justice, salt applications, stream restoration, PFAS, and drinking water regulations.
- The Maryland budget faces a significant deficit, impacting new projects and programs.
- A potential water advisory day for the General Assembly is being planned.

In the Virginia General Assembly key topics included:

- State funding for wastewater and stormwater projects.
- Potential expansion of PFAS regulations.
- The Virginia budget is in good shape, with excess revenues exceeding forecasts.

Stormwater Permitting Updates:

- Maryland:
 - The state is finalizing the State Highway Administration (SHA) permit and phase two permits.
 - Key requirements include additional restoration, green stormwater infrastructure,



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and thermal sensitivity considerations.

- Virginia:
 - The state recently reissued the VDOT permit, including salt management requirements.
 - Arlington County's permit negotiations have begun.

6. PLANNING FOR 2025

Caitlin Bolton, COG staff

Ms. Bolton discussed the proposed meeting dates and topics for 2025. Meetings will continue to be held bimonthly on the third Friday. Topics will include legislative and budget priorities, strategic planning, and a potential boat tour in the fall.

Nominations for the vice chair position are still open.

7. MEMBER & STAFF UPDATES

- Members shared updates on various topics, including the Anacostia River boat tour and upcoming events.
- Ms. Bolton reminded members about the COG's annual meeting and membership awards reception on December 11th and summarized the Water Resources General Updates document.

6. ADJOURNMENT

The next CBPC meeting will be January 17, 2025



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PARTICIPANTS:

Maria Mackie, College Park, MD
Susan Cunningham, Arlington County Board
Kenny Boddye (Vice Chair), Prince William County
Shannon Moore, Fredrick County Government
Heather Gewandter, City of Rockville
Andrea Lewis, Fairfax County Government
Matt Ries, DC Water
Christine Wellons, Montgomery County
Natali.Fani Gonzalez, (Chair) Montgomery County
Rick Mittler, LLWG
Kathy Smith, Fairfax County
Ryan Losak, Banner Public Affairs
Amy Jackson, Alexandria
Joel Caudill, WSSC Water
Norm Goulet, NOVA
Myles Cooper, Alexrenew
Thom Lipinski, Loudoun Water
Jaleel Shujath, DC Water
Cara Honzak, Takoma Park
Lisa Ochsenhirt, AquaLaw

COG Staff:

Caitlin Bolton
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Katherine Dyer
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