



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION · MARCH 2023

FEDERAL AGENCY BUDGET REQUEST FISCAL YEAR 2024

SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS CONTINUES TO BE MADE IN THE restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its 64,000-square mile watershed. The pace and intensity of our work has accelerated, particularly with the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022. Both these bills provided significant new federal resources for restoration. And each federal dollar spent leverages three more from state, local and private partners.

As Congress begins deliberations on the FY 2024 federal budget, the Chesapeake Bay Commission offers this report to identify the federal funding required to continue the success. All levels of government, our citizens and the private sector are united in achieving the singular goal of a healthy ecosystem. We also highlight four priorities where targeted action will strategically accelerate the pace and intensity of our progress.

The Bay's Congressional delegation is to be thanked for their work on the aforementioned federal legislation and the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023; they have been steadfast in their commitment to restore the watershed and its living resources.

Who We Are and What We Do

The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a tri-state legislative commission with bipartisan membership from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia. We work to advance policy at all levels of government to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We are the only legislative branch member of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership. The joint federal-state effort is producing tangible results in cleaner water, healthier fisheries and greater economic and environmental resilience. It is a model receiving global recognition.



Chesapeake Bay Commission
Policy for the Bay

The Commission's Top Budget Priorities

✓ ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY Geographic Programs — Chesapeake Bay: \$92,000K (FY23 level \$92,000K)

These monies maintain the nucleus of the federal-state partnership to restore the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Program funds are used to coordinate the complex science and monitoring efforts that drive restoration. As we near the 2025 goal for clean water, the challenge and urgency of our work grows. The majority of the funding supports grants to state and local governments and nongovernmental organizations, for project implementation, to achieve improvements to water quality and the enhancement of habitat for living resources.

✓ U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD): \$15,000K (FY23 level \$8,000K)

America's Conservation Enhancement Act created the Chesapeake WILD program in 2020. The law authorizes up to \$15 million in grants from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for restoring fish and wildlife habitat in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Commission supports fully funding this program to enhance USFWS's critical role in the broader Chesapeake Bay partnership. This non-regulatory program enhances fish and wildlife habitat throughout the watershed by working with local partners to implement on-the-ground projects.

✓ NATIONAL PARK SERVICE Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails Program: \$6,000K (FY23 level \$3,027K)

Through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails Program, the National Park Service provides unique and vital assistance to state, local and nongovernmental partners throughout the watershed to increase public access to the Bay, to support educational programming and outdoor recreation and to foster conservation

stewardship among residents and visitors. First authorized by Congress in 1998, the Program has contributed over \$30 million in technical and financial assistance across the Bay watershed. Through these efforts, the Program supports local economies through the promotion of outdoor recreation and heritage tourism.

Despite serving communities and partners across the watershed, funding for the Gateways Program has not kept up with growing demand over its 25-year history. Twenty years ago, the Gateways Program funding was \$2.469 million — it has increased very slowly to only \$3.027 million in FY 2023. We respectfully request that this program be increased to \$6.0 million in the FY 2024 budget to help meet the tremendous demand for access to our natural, historic and cultural resources in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This request is consistent with legislation to establish a Chesapeake Bay National Recreation Area, which would provide an authorized funding level of \$6 million.

✓ U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) — Conservation Operations: \$1,200,000K (FY23 level \$941,124K)

Conservation technical assistance (CTA) is the foundation of NRCS's ability to deliver effective conservation. By working with agricultural producers to prepare and implement conservation plans, sediment and nutrient loads to our waterways are reduced.

In the jurisdictional Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans, 85 percent of the pollutant load reductions are planned to come from the agricultural sector. This can only happen with increased CTA. The Commission also supports targeted, enhanced CTA to the Susquehanna River basin and other high-impact agricultural basins in the Bay watershed. Funding enhancements to Farm Bill programs in the Inflation Reduction Act make this request even more timely.

FY 2024 Budget Request Summary

Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

- ✓ EPA — Geographic Programs — Chesapeake Bay: \$92,000K
- ✓ EPA — Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319) Grants: \$190,000K
- ✓ EPA — Pollution Control (Sec. 106) Grants: \$243,873K
- ✓ EPA — Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund: \$3,000,000K
- ✓ DOI-USGS — Land Management Research Program: \$55,806K
- ✓ DOI-USFWS — Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD): \$15,000K
- ✓ DOI-USFWS — Habitat Conservation — Coastal Programs: \$14,476K
- ✓ DOI-NPS — Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails Program: \$6,000K
- ✓ USDA-Forest Service — Forest Stewardship Program: \$15,652K
- ✓ Land and Water Conservation Fund (all agencies): \$900,000K

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies

- ✓ USACE-Construction — Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection: \$11,350K
- ✓ USACE-Construction — Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery: \$7,500K
- ✓ USACE-Construction — Continuing Authorities Program — Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration (Sec. 206): \$15,000K; Emergency Streambank and Shoreline Protection (Sec. 14): \$11,000K
- ✓ USACE-Investigations — Coordination with Other Water Resource Agencies: \$1,000K

Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies

- ✓ NOAA-NMFS — Habitat Conservation and Restoration: \$61,500K
- ✓ NOAA-NMFS — Regional Councils and Fisheries Commissions: \$46,297K
- ✓ NOAA-Office of Education — B-WET Regional Programs: \$12,000K
- ✓ NOAA-Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research — National Sea Grant College Program: \$158,000K

Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration and Related Agencies

- ✓ USDA-NRCS — Conservation Operations: \$1,200,000K
- ✓ USDA-NRCS/FSA — 2018 Farm Bill Programs: Full Funding of Mandatory Programs

Defense

- ✓ DOD-Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program: \$178,000K

FY 2024 Budget Request, Line-by-Line

Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Subcommittee

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

✓ **Geographic Programs — Chesapeake Bay: \$92,000K** (FY23 level \$92,000K)

See Page 2 for program narrative.

✓ **Nonpoint Source (Sec. 319) Grants: \$190,000K** (FY23 level \$182,000K)

An overwhelming majority of Americans — 215 million (more than 70 percent) — live within two miles of a polluted lake, river, stream or coastal area. States have identified more than 600,000 miles of rivers and streams, more than 13 million acres of lakes and more than 500,000 acres of wetlands that do not meet state water quality goals. The Chesapeake region is no exception, with 21 percent of streams sampled ranked in poor or very poor condition. Pennsylvania alone has 17,899 miles of rivers and streams impaired for aquatic life, fifth most in the U.S. The Sec. 319 grants are a key resource in the effort to improve and protect our nation's waters. In FY 2022, this program provided \$8.9 million for Bay restoration.

✓ **Pollution Control (Sec. 106) Grants: \$243,873K** (FY 23 level \$238,000K)

This national program helps states in the Chesapeake Bay watershed manage the federal water pollution permit program. Under the Clean Water Act, it is unlawful to discharge any pollutant into U.S. waters without a permit. Without adequate funding, this permit process gets bogged down, resulting in business losses and reduced permit monitoring and enforcement. In FY 2022, this program provided \$12.5 million for Bay restoration.

✓ **Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund: \$3,000,000K** (FY23 level \$1,638,861K)

Financial support for this program was substantially increased by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act through gradually increasing capitalization grants. Additionally, the Act also increased the authorized funding level for the program each year from FY 2022 to FY 2026. The Commission requests federal funding at the authorized level for FY 2024.

This program provides low-cost financing to local communities to improve water-related infrastructure and local water quality. States have the flexibility to fund a range of projects that address their highest priority water quality needs. Using a combination of federal and state funds, state programs provide loans to eligible recipients to: construct municipal wastewater facilities; control nonpoint sources of pollution; build decentralized wastewater treatment systems; create green infrastructure projects; protect estuaries; and fund other water quality projects. In FY 2022, this program provided \$88.7 million for Bay restoration, and the enhancements from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act provided an additional \$142.3 million.

DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR

U.S. Geological Survey

✓ **Land Management Research Program (LMRP): \$55,806K, with \$9,000K for Chesapeake Bay Activities** (FY23 level \$54,806K, with \$8,000K for Chesapeake Bay Activities)

Decision makers at all levels rely on U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) science to devise and implement plans to reduce the impacts of nutrients, sediment and toxic contaminants, improve habitat for freshwater fisheries and waterfowl and focus land protection. USGS

monitoring and analysis allow us to determine the effectiveness of our strategies.

We request a modest increase of \$1 million within the LMRP to expand and refine USGS work in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. A critical need of the partnership is to accelerate our understanding of progress towards restoration goals and outcomes, and the impacts of our management actions. This can only be done with the best science that USGS can provide. The Commission requests specific support within the LMRP budget for “\$9,000,000 for Chesapeake Bay activities”.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

- ✓ **Chesapeake Watershed Investments for Landscape Defense (WILD): \$15,000K** (FY23 level \$8,000K)

See Page 2 for program narrative.

- ✓ **Habitat Conservation — Coastal Programs: \$14,476K** (FY23 level \$13,957K)

This is a voluntary habitat conservation program that provides technical and financial assistance, in collaboration with partners, for the benefit of protected species and resources. The Chesapeake Bay is one of 24 priority coastal ecosystems. Funding includes support for the Chesapeake Bay Nutria Eradication Project.

National Park Service

- ✓ **Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails Program: \$6,000K** (FY23 level \$3,027K)

See Page 2 for program narrative.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Forest Service

- ✓ **Forest Stewardship: \$15,652K** (FY23 level \$12,500K)

This is the primary Forest Service program focused on private forestland management and conservation. Priority uses include restoring

riparian forest buffers, adding urban tree canopy and protecting high-value forest.

- ✓ **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) (all agencies): \$900,000K** (mandatory funding)

The LWCF is the nation’s premier land conservation program. Through locally driven projects, it provides for the permanent protection of landscapes to safeguard the rivers and streams feeding into the Bay, while supporting local economies through recreation and tourism. Each year, a handful of top-ranked projects within the Bay watershed are selected for funding.

Energy and Water Development, and Related Agencies Subcommittee

U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS

- ✓ **Construction — Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection: \$11,350K** (FY23 level \$11,350K)

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) plays an important role in Chesapeake Bay restoration. The Corps’ Comprehensive Plan provides a strategic roadmap for investments in aquatic ecosystem restoration throughout the watershed. Under Section 510, USACE is provided an enhanced opportunity to partner with non-federal sponsors to design and construct projects.

- ✓ **Construction — Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery: \$7,500K** (FY23 level \$7,500K)

The Corps is also very active in oyster restoration. With current populations at less than one percent of historic levels, the Bay agreement targets oyster restoration as a key objective. The Commission recommends report language to support this work.

- ✓ **Construction — Continuing Authorities Program — Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration (Sec. 206): \$15,000K** (FY23 level \$13,000K) and **Emergency Streambank and Shoreline Protection (Sec. 14): \$11,000K** (FY23 level \$11,000K)

These national programs provide funding for habitat restoration and for projects to reduce flood damage to public infrastructure in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

- ✓ **Investigations — Coordination with Other Water Resource Agencies: \$1,000K** (FY23 level \$1,000K)

The Department of Defense and the Corps are full partners in the joint federal-state Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. This funding supports Corps staff to serve their critical role as the programmatic and technical advisors to the partnership in their areas of expertise, such as oyster restoration, wetland creation and flood control.

Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Subcommittee

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA)

National Marine Fisheries Service

- ✓ **Habitat Conservation and Restoration (HCR): \$61,500K** (FY23 level \$56,684K)

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office is budgeted within HCR. In FY 2022, this program provided \$6.8 million to support critical fisheries efforts, such as population assessment, restoration and habitat improvement. Critical species such as oysters, blue crabs, striped bass and menhaden have huge social and economic importance. The Commission supports report language to specifically fund enhanced oyster restoration efforts within the Chesapeake Bay at \$3.5 million and an increase

in funding to \$7.3 million to support this effort and fisheries science more generally.

- ✓ **Regional Councils and Fisheries Commissions: \$46,297K** (FY23 level \$44,297K)

Regional fishery coordination is critical to the stewardship and sustainable harvest of our migratory fisheries, both commercial and recreational. Working with state representatives from the executive and legislative branches, policy and management plans are crafted based on the best science and stakeholder engagement.

Office of Education

- ✓ **Bay-Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Regional Programs: \$12,000K** (FY23 level \$8,700K)

NOAA's B-WET program is an environmental education program that promotes locally based science learning for K-12 students and teachers. B-WET provides competitive grants to encourage capacity building and partnerships. In FY 2022, this program provided \$2.8 million towards Chesapeake stewardship and environmental literacy. We request an increase to \$3 million for the Chesapeake given the success of this program.

Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research

- ✓ **National Sea Grant College Program (includes Marine Aquaculture Program): \$158,000K** (FY23 level \$94,000K)

The Sea Grant program works to enhance the practical use and conservation of coastal and marine resources to create a sustainable economy and environment. Within the Bay watershed, priorities include research to support sustainable fisheries and aquaculture. In FY 2022, this program provided \$4.9 million towards Bay restoration. This request is consistent with that of the Sea Grant Association.

Agriculture, Rural Development, FDA and Related Agencies Subcommittee

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

- ✓ **Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) — Conservation Operations: \$1,200,000K** (FY23 level \$941,124K)

See Page 2 for program narrative.

- ✓ **NRCS and Farm Service Agency (FSA): Full funding of mandatory conservation programs authorized in 2018 Farm Bill**

Farm Bill programs provide the financial backbone of the region's agricultural conservation efforts. In FY 2022, \$89 million was programmed for cost-share assistance to Bay watershed farmers. These dollars are critical to achieving the pollution reductions necessary to achieve clean water throughout the watershed. Core programs include the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program

(CREP), the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

Defense Subcommittee

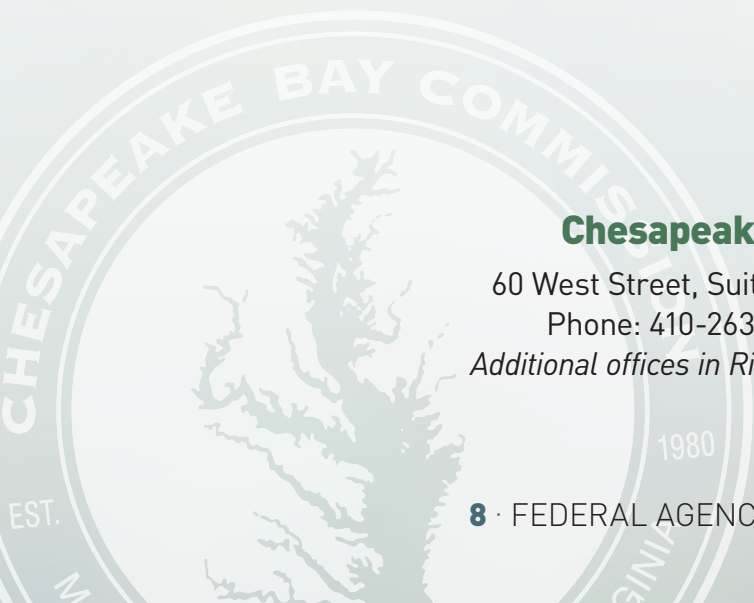
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

- ✓ **Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration Program (REPI): \$178,000K** (FY 23 level \$178,000K)

The REPI Program is the Department of Defense's key tool to protect the military's mission to avoid encroachment and land-use conflicts near installations. It provides funding for conservation easements to buffer the off-base impacts of military activities, such as flight or ordnance training. There are 14 installations with active REPI partnerships located in the Chesapeake Bay watershed; these land conservation efforts also help us meet our nutrient reduction goals.

In Conclusion

CONGRESS HAS SHOWN TREMENDOUS SUPPORT FOR THE CHESAPEAKE BAY restoration effort, resulting in significant progress towards meeting our mutual goal of a healthy Chesapeake Bay. The Commission's FY 2024 funding recommendations will allow us to continue and enhance our progress. Watershed restoration can be achieved through the collaborative will, strength and determination of federal, state and local governments, their legislatures, and the public.



Chesapeake Bay Commission

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