



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

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NOVEMBER 4-5, 2021, QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chesapeake Bay Commission held its fourth quarterly meeting of 2021 on Thursday and Friday, November 4-5. The meeting was held in Irvington, VA.

Commission members in attendance:

Delegate Robert Bloxom
Delegate Tony Bridges
Delegate David Bulova
Senator Sarah Elfreth
Representative Keith Gillespie
Delegate Nancy Guy
Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
Representative John Hershey
Secretary Ann Jennings
Senator Lynwood Lewis
Secretary Patrick McDonnell (represented by Aneca Atkinson)
MD Citizen Member, Thomas “Mac” Middleton
VA Citizen Member, Missy Cotter Smasal
Delegate Dana Stein
Representative Mike Sturla
Senator Gene Yaw

Not in attendance:

PA Citizen Member, Warren Elliott
Senator Guy Guzzone
Senator Emmett Hanger
Delegate Sara Love
Senator Scott Martin
RDML Charles Rock

Staff: MD – David Goshorn
PA – Jill Whitcomb
Navy – Kevin Du Bois

CBC Staff:

Ann Swanson
Jen Dieux
Mark Hoffman
Marel King
Adrienne Kotula

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021

WELCOME

Chair Bulova welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 12:50 P.M.

ROLL CALL

Chair Bulova then asked Executive Director Swanson to call the roll. A quorum was present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair Bulova called for approval of the minutes from the September meeting. The September meeting minutes were unanimously approved and there was no discussion.

ADOPTION/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Chair Bulova asked for comments or questions on the agenda from the members. Hearing none, the agenda was unanimously approved and there was no discussion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LIGHTNING ROUND UPDATES

Chair Bulova asked Commission Executive Director Swanson to update the members on several timely issues that both staff and members had been working on.

Executive Director Swanson updated the Commission members on the Climate Directive that was signed at the October 1st Executive Council meeting. She also provided an update on the progress of the Commission staff's federal advocacy on the Chesapeake Resilient Farms Initiative (CRFI), the infrastructure package, as well as the Build Back Better package. Finally, Executive Director Swanson reported that the CBC's Annual Audit resulted in zero recommended actions.

Commission members made a motion and a second to request staff draft a letter to President Biden requesting the inclusion of the CRFI in his FY2023 budget proposal. The motion was approved unanimously.

A PROLIFERATION OF PLASTICS

Chair Bulova introduced Matthew Robinson, Environmental Protection Specialist, DC Department of Energy and Environment and Chair of the Plastics Pollution Action Team for the Chesapeake Bay Program.

Mr. Robinson began his presentation by discussing the history of plastics production and noting that production is continuing to increase exponentially. He then noted that plastics pollution is also increasing and sharing details on its current impacts across the watershed and the world. He detailed the current evidence on the impacts of plastics pollution to humans and ecosystems. Finally, he discussed what the Chesapeake Bay Program's Plastics Pollution Action Team has as their charge moving forward. This includes making a strategic investment in science, sending science needs signals out to academic institutions, as well as developing a plastic pollution source assessment and reduction strategy.

Commission members requested staff develop a plastics pollution work plan to investigate potential policy actions based on scientific findings about pollution sources and effective reduction strategies.

CLIMATE POLICY GAPS ANALYSIS

Executive Director Swanson presented facts on the climate-driven impacts being experienced within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. She then introduced the Climate Resilient Policy Gaps Analysis that was completed by the CBC staff in partnership with the Virginia Coastal Policy Center and Chesapeake Legal Alliance. The five priority actions identified in the analysis were:

1. Define a State Leadership Role
2. Establish a State Advisory Group
3. Require a State-Level Plan
4. Dedicate Funding for State Resilience Projects
5. Enhance Research, Data Collection & Information Gateways

DELEGATION CLIMATE POLICY DISCUSSIONS

Chair Bulova instructed the group to move into the adjacent room for Delegation-specific discussions on Climate Policy. The Delegations held discussions on the five priority actions outlined by Executive Director Swanson and determined which actions to investigate further and potentially pursue in their upcoming legislative sessions.

LIVING SHORELINE TOUR

The Commission was joined by Will Smiley, the Tides Inn's Ecologist, for a tour of the 18,000 square foot living shoreline installation underway along Carter's Creek. The project includes plantings, oyster shell stabilization, as well as a large boardwalk for interpretation opportunities. Their partnership with the Friends of the Rappahannock on the project was also discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 4:45 P.M.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2021

WELCOME & ROLL CALL

Chair Bulova called the meeting to order at 9:15 A.M. and asked Executive Director Swanson to call the roll. A quorum was present.

OYSTER MANAGEMENT & RESTORATION

Chair Bulova introduced Andrew Button, Head of Conservation and Replenishment, Virginia Marine Resources Commission. Mr. Button discussed the history of oysters within the Chesapeake Bay watershed and the complexities involved with oyster management.

Chair Bulova then welcomed Captain J.C. Hudgins, a Matthews County Waterman and President of the Virginia Watermen's Association. Mr. Hudgins detailed the complexities involved with the commercial harvest of oysters within the watershed. While he has been successful in making a living on the water, it requires flexibility in dealing with the various regulations at play as well as a willingness and ability to switch to different fisheries based upon ecosystem conditions at any given time.

Chair Bulova welcomed the final speaker on Oyster Management & Restoration, Dr. Allison Colden, who is the Maryland Fisheries Scientist at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. Dr. Colden

discussed examples of oyster management throughout the world that could lead to a more sustainable fishery moving forward.

BLUE CRAB ABUNDANCE

Chair Bulova introduced Dr. Tom Miller, the Director at Chesapeake Biological Laboratory UMCES and Member of the Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Assessment Committee. Dr. Miller discussed the trends in population of Blue Crabs throughout the Chesapeake Bay as well as his concerns about what these trends showed. In particular, he expressed concerns that we need to develop a better understanding of the current state of the stock in the Chesapeake as well as investigate the root cause for the fluctuation in the juvenile Blue Crab population.

Commission members made a motion and a second to request staff draft letters to the Chesapeake Bay Program's Fisheries Goal Implementation Team to request a new Blue Crab Stock Assessment as well as to study the reasons behind the decline in the juvenile Blue Crab population. The motion was approved.

SEAFOOD PROCESSING

Chair Bulova welcomed A.J. Erskine who is the General Manager at Cowart Seafood & Bevans Oyster Co. Mr. Erskine presented on the importance of a reliable workforce for seafood processors in the Chesapeake Bay. He detailed the difficulties that have been and continue to be experienced by the industry and requested the Commission's assistance in supporting efforts to amend the H-2B Nonimmigrant Temporary Worker Program visas to expand the existing exemption for fish roe processing to include seafood processing.

Commission members made a motion and second to request staff draft a letter to Senator Van Hollen expressing Commission support for efforts to amend the H-2B Nonimmigrant Temporary Worker Program visas to expand the existing exemption for fish roe processing to include seafood processing. The motion was approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Bulova asked if there was any new business. There was no new business brought forward.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Bulova asked if any members of the public would like to provide comments.

David McGuinness provided comments regarding the Maine lobster fishery and mentioned that he had questions for Dr. Tom Miller after the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 12:30 P.M.