



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

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MAY 2022, QUARTERLY MEETING

The Chesapeake Bay Commission held its second quarterly meeting of 2022 on Thursday and Friday, May 5-6, 2022. The meeting was held in Lancaster, PA.

Commission members in attendance:

Delegate Robert Bloxom
Delegate David Bulova
Senator Sarah Elfreth
Representative Keith Gillespie
Senator Guy Guzzone
Secretary Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio
Senator Emmett Hanger
Senator Lynwood Lewis
Delegate Sara Love
Senator Scott Martin
Secretary Patrick McDonnell (Friday only, represented by Jill Whitcomb on Thursday)
Representative Mike Sturla
Andrew Wheeler
Delegate Tony Wilt
Senator Gene Yaw

Not in attendance:

Delegate Tony Bridges
PA Citizen Member, Warren Elliott
Representative John Hershey
MD Citizen Member, Thomas "Mac" Middleton
RDML Charles Rock
VA Citizen Member, Missy Cotter Smasal
Delegate Dana Stein

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

CBC Staff:

Ann Swanson
Jen Dieux
Mark Hoffman
Marel King
Adrienne Kotula

THURSDAY, MAY 5, 2022

WELCOME

Members met in the Cork Factory Hotel lobby and proceeded to board the bus for the scheduled field tour/trip.

AN EXTRAORDINARY VIEW

After arriving at Susquehannock State Park, the Commission was welcomed by Secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources, Cindy Dunn, and Mark Platts, President of the Susquehanna National Heritage Area at the Hawk Point Overlook. Mr. Platts discussed the history of the area and its importance to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

LUNCH AND WELCOME

The members enjoyed lunch and were welcomed to Pennsylvania by Senator Scott Martin, Representative Brian Cutler, Speaker of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives as well as Representative Dan Moul, Chair of the Pennsylvania House Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee. Executive Secretary of the State Conservation Commission, Karl Brown, also provided remarks on behalf of the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

FARM TOUR ORIENTATION: ONE CREEK AT A TIME

The Commission then boarded the bus for a tour of conservation projects in the Fishing Creek and Pequea Creek watersheds. The Commission was joined by Chris Thompson, Manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District, and Allyson Gibson, Director of Strategic Partnerships & Programs, and John Cox, Senior Advisor, Lancaster Clean Water Partners. Commission members learned of the importance of partnerships in the completion of projects in Lancaster and heard from the King Family on their personal experience of implementing conservation practices on their farm.

The tour concluded at the Cork Factory Hotel at 5:00 P.M.

FRIDAY, MAY 6, 2022

The meeting was called to order at 8:15 A.M. by Chair Elfreth. She welcomed new Commission members Delegate Tony Wilt and Governor Youngkin's representative, Andrew Wheeler.

ROLL CALL

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

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair Elfreth called for approval of the minutes from the January meeting. Senator Martin moved to approve the minutes as presented. Delegate Bulova seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. There was no discussion.

ADOPTION/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Chair Elfreth asked for comments or questions on the agenda from the members. Hearing none, Delegate Love moved to approve the agenda as presented. Delegate Bulova seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. There was no discussion.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S LIGHTNING ROUND UPDATES

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

Executive Director Swanson detailed several items of importance. First, she discussed corrections to the CAST Modeling Tool that resulted in an additional 6 million pounds of nitrogen that have not previously been accounted for in the pollution loading scenarios. Second, she detailed the results of the Commission's requests to the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team (GIT) for a Blue Crab Workshop and the initiation of a new stock assessment. The Sustainable Fisheries GIT has agreed that a workshop with broad stakeholder participation would provide valuable scientific collaboration and has started the plans for a fall workshop. While a stock assessment has yet to be initiated, the information gathered from the workshop will help to inform a stock assessment in the near future. She also alerted the members to a one-page handout in their folders related to academic research on the impacts of blue catfish on the blue crab population. Executive Director Swanson then detailed the work that has been underway with EPA Region III and the Pennsylvania Delegation to help ensure success of the Clean Water Fund legislation. Finally, she detailed the Capitol focus of the Commission's 2023 meetings – Annapolis, the District of Columbia, Richmond, and Harrisburg.

CBC ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Chair Elfreth called for approval of the CBC 2023 Meeting Dates. Senator Martin moved to approve the dates as presented. Delegate Bulova seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. There was no discussion.

Chair Elfreth called for approval of the CBC FY 2023 Budget. Senator Martin moved to approve the budget as presented. Delegate Love seconded the motion which was approved unanimously. There was no discussion.

Given the Commission was ahead of schedule, the Chair decided to take up the State Legislative Reports in advance of the USDA announcement.

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

Delegation Chairs Rep. Keith Gillespie, Senator Lynwood Lewis, and Senator Sarah Elfreth detailed legislative successes and lessons learned from each of their respective jurisdictions. Rep. Gillespie noted the work on the Clean Streams Fund and the fertilizer bill; Senator Lewis noted a number of legislative actions in Virginia, including work on climate change resiliency; and

Senator Elfreth noted legislative progress in Maryland related to PFAS, climate change, State Park funding and staffing, climate resiliency, oysters and conservation finance.

NEW USDA CHESAPEAKE INITIATIVES

The Commission was joined by U.S. Senators Robert Casey, Jr. and Benjamin Cardin, USDA Undersecretary of Farm Production and Conservation Robert Bonnie and Vice President of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation Alison Prost. Undersecretary Bonnie announced the establishment of the new Chesapeake Bay States' Partnership Initiative to provide a new and innovative framework to leverage USDA conservation financial and technical assistance, locally led conservation, and coordination with state partners. With an initial investment of \$22.5 million, it is hoped the program will grow to meet watershed needs in the future. In addition to the financial investment, USDA and EPA will establish a joint task force to improve the accounting of agricultural conservation practices. Each of the other panelist then spoke about the importance of the new USDA program.

Senators Casey and Cardin and Ms. Prost described two items of Congressionally-designated spending that will support agricultural technical assistance in two small watersheds of Pennsylvania.

The panelists then fielded questions from the press.

SHARPENING OUR FOCUS INSTALLMENT I: AGRICULTURE

Executive Director Ann Swanson reviewed the targeting of priority basins as a part of funding decisions at the Chesapeake Bay Program. She reviewed the data that helps guide decision-making as well as reviewing the newly classified "most-effective basins."

THE NEXT LEVEL

Scott Phillips, Chesapeake Bay Coordinator, USGS and Joel Dunn, President and CEO, Chesapeake Conservancy, then discussed how we can use data to leverage nutrient and sediment practices to achieve other priorities. By increasing our focus on people, wildlife, and habitat we can achieve higher returns on our water quality investments. We can enhance the data tools that we have to improve our decision-making to ensure multiple benefits.

COMMISSION DISCUSSION

The members had a follow-up discussion on the morning's presentations, noting the value of targeting to achieve maximum benefit from state and federal investments, with acknowledgement that the TMDL remains a regulatory driver.

Senator Elfreth suggested that a customized map for each member's district could be provided by the Chesapeake Conservancy to help illustrate the targeting technology presented.

It was the consensus of the Commission to encourage non-government partners for feedback on permit and bureaucratic issues that are hindering implementation.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Elfreth asked if there was any new business. There was no new business.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Elfreth called Chris Thompson, Manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District, who had requested to speak. He thanked the Commission for their efforts and noted his appreciation for their time visiting Lancaster farms.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 11:55 A.M.