

**CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION
SPECIAL MEETING ON CONOWINGO DAM
DECEMBER 14, 2017
MEETING NOTES**

The Chesapeake Bay Commission held a special meeting on December 14, 2017 in Annapolis, MD. Its purpose was to advise the Executive Director and staff in advance of the Chesapeake Bay Program's Principal Staff Committee meeting on December 19-20, during which issues related to incorporating new data related to nutrient and sediment loads coming to the Bay from the Susquehanna River, due to in-fill behind the Conowingo Dam, would be considered. There was no quorum present, and hence, no formal action was taken by the Commission members present.

Commission members in attendance:

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| Secretary Mark Belton | Senator Emmett Hanger |
| Delegate Barbara Frush | Secretary Patrick McDonnell |
| Delegate Tawanna Gaines | Senator Thomas "Mac" Middleton |
| Representative Keith Gillespie | Representative Michael Sturla |
| Senator Guy Guzzone | Secretary Molly Ward |

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| Staff: Ann Swanson | Marel King |
| Ann Jennings | Mark Hoffman |

The Numbers (Gary Shenk, Hydrologist, USGS, Chesapeake Bay Program Office)

Mr. Shenk noted that the hydrological processes behind Conowingo Dam are not different than any other similar structure; over time sediment collects behind man-made dams, and ultimately a state of "dynamic equilibrium" is reached, where net sediment and nutrient inputs equal outputs (as measured over an extended period of time). What has changed related to Conowingo, is that at the time the current TMDLs were initially established, it was believed that the Dam had 15 or more years of additional trapping capacity. That is now known not to be the case, and we are at or very close to equilibrium at present. Hence, additional loads from the Susquehanna need to be incorporated into the planning process to meet the TMDL load reduction targets. The estimated load reductions needed are 6 million lbs of N, and 0.26 million lbs of P, annually.

The Choices (Lee Currey, Director, Water and Science Administration, MDE)

Mr. Currey noted that the Dam is currently undergoing a relicensing process, that must include a Water Quality Certification issued by MDE. Sediment and nutrient load reductions are just one issue, other include fish passage, flow regimens and debris management.

Originally, the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team was asked to consider four options related to the allocation of the needed load reductions. During this process, a fifth option emerged, to consider the "new" Conowingo loads separate from the existing jurisdictions WIPs, to effectively create a new multi-partner WIP specific to deal with these loads. The details of this option are shown in the handout "New Recommendations from 12/5/17 WQ GIT Meeting".

There was discussion about this option, with input from agency representatives from Pennsylvania and Virginia, and Commission members. Given that many of the specific details of this option had not been worked out, there was concern expressed about it, while at the same

time it provided a means for each jurisdiction to continue on their current path of WIP Phase III development, and deal with Conowingo as a “separate” concern, and hence some general support.

Commission Input

Specific input was provided by the Commission related to the details provided in the “New Recommendations from 12/5/17 WQ GIT Meeting.”. It needs to be clear that the Commission, EPA and Exelon are part of the collaboration to address this. Pooled resources needs to clearly include federal resources. All the partners need to develop not only the plan, but also the process.