



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

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The Chesapeake Bay Commission held its second quarterly meeting of 2026 on Thursday and Friday, May 7-8, 2026. The meeting was held in Annapolis, MD.

Commission members in attendance:

Delegate Nick Allen
Delegate Alex Askew
RADM Stephen Barnett
Representative Kerry Benninghoff
Delegate Robert Bloxom
Secretary David Bulova
Delegate Betsy Carr
Representative Carol Hill-Evans
Delegate Julian Ivey
Secretary Josh Kurtz
Senator Sara Love
Senator Scott Martin
Senator Jeremy McPike
Pam Northam, VA Citizen Member
Representative Nikki Rivera
Delegate Sheila Ruth
Secretary Jessica Shirley
Senator Richard Stuart
Carmera Thomas-Wilhite, MD Citizen Member
Senator Mary Washington
Senator Gene Yaw

Not in attendance:

Warren Elliott, PA Citizen Member

Member Staff:

DoD Kevin DuBois
MD Dave Goshorn
VA Adrienne Kotula

PA Jill Whitcomb
DoD Remya Wiley

CBC Staff:

Norah Carlos
Jen Dieux
Anna Killius

Marel King
Greg O'Connell
Maggie Woodward

Thursday, May 7, 2026

DELEGATION LUNCH BREAKOUTS

Delegations discussed news and issues relevant to their jurisdictions over lunch.

WELCOME AND NEW MEMBER INTRODUCTIONS

Commission Chair Gene Yaw called the meeting to order at 1:14 p.m. and introduced Maryland Delegate Dylan Behler. Delegate Behler represents District 30A, which includes Annapolis, and is a member of the Anne Arundel County Board of Library Trustees. Delegate Behler welcomed the Commission to Annapolis and to the Michael E. Busch Annapolis Library.

Chair Yaw then welcomed the Commission's newest members, starting with Delegate Betsy Carr from Virginia, and Ms. Pamela Northam, Virginia's Citizen Member. Next, Chair Yaw recognized David Bulova in his new role as the Virginia Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources. Finally, Chair Yaw welcomed Norah Carlos, the Commission's new Virginia Director.

ROLL CALL

Chair Yaw then asked Executive Director Anna Killius to call the roll. A quorum was present.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Chair Yaw called for approval of the minutes from the January meeting. The minutes were approved by unanimous consent.

ADOPTION/MODIFICATION OF AGENDA

Chair Yaw asked for comments or questions on the agenda from the members. Hearing none, the agenda was approved unanimously.

DELEGATION CHAIR REPORTS

Each delegation reported on the results of their ongoing or recently concluded legislative sessions.

Pennsylvania

Senator Yaw reported on a proposal to increase the Clean Streams Fund, progress of legislation to ban PFAS in firefighting foam, and an upcoming presentation on the Chesapeake Bay Commission and its history. Senator Martin distributed copies of the latest *Lancaster County Watershed Report Card* documenting activities and progress.

Virginia

Senator McPike began the discussion by noting that the state budget has not been finalized, but several Commission members are deeply involved in the process. Delegate Carr is Vice Chair of the Appropriations Committee and Senator Stuart and Delegate Bloxom are conferees. Notable legislation that passed during the Session included tweaks to the beneficial use of dredged material (HB 52 - Bloxom), establishment of the Habitat Policy Oversight Committee within the Virginia Marine Resources Commission (HB 390 – Askew, incorporating HB 619 – Bloxom), requirements for new and industrial users of POTWs to monitor and report PFAS in their discharge (SB 138 – McPike), and requirements to sample sewage sludge for PFAS, with implications for land application based on PFAS concentrations (SB 386 – Stuart).

Maryland

Delegate Ruth congratulated the Maryland Delegation on finishing a very challenging session and asked members to share significant outcomes. Senator Love recapped two bills related to reducing pollution from per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). The first was a successful bill that placed limits on spreading PFAS-contaminated biosolids on land. The second bill, which did not pass, would have prohibited the sale of specific products containing PFAS, including personal care products, textiles, and children's products. Senator Washington discussed a bill that would establish a process for the Maryland Department of the Environment to determine the flood risk for development proposed in areas identified as being at risk of flooding as well as a bill that would have restricted the use of stream restoration projects to satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements, municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permitting requirements, or the requirements of a total maximum daily load (TMDL), neither of which passed. Delegate Allen explained the Maryland House's Environment & Transportation Committee's new role in considering energy-related bills. Delegate Ivey celebrated investments in the Anacostia River. Finally, Secretary Kurtz gave an overview of the Supporting Inclusive Community Adaptation Act, which aims to enhance community participation in planning resilience projects.

Following the legislative updates, Commission members had the opportunity to take a brief tour of stormwater features and pollinator gardens surrounding the library.

FEDERAL PARTNER SHOWCASE

Federal agencies working throughout the watershed joined the Commission to showcase their mission areas and programs. Commission members divided into small groups for focused conversations with partners from the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Agriculture - Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture - Forest Service, National Park Service, and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Each agency shared highlights from their work in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Commission members explored how the states and federal programs can work in harmony to further Bay restoration and opportunities that are emerging under the revised *Watershed Agreement*.

Chair Yaw thanked the many federal partners in attendance and adjourned for the day at 4:00 p.m.

Friday, May 8, 2026

WELCOME & ROLL CALL

Chair Yaw called the meeting to order at 9:15 a.m. and asked Executive Director Killius to call the roll. A quorum was present.

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

The Commission unanimously approved the 2027 Meeting Dates. The Commission unanimously approved the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget and the 2028 Appropriations Request.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATES

Chair Yaw asked Executive Director Killius to give her Executive Director's Report. Director Killius provided updates as follows:

CBC Activities

Commission staff shared details of the work they have been doing since the January meeting. This included assisting legislators with Bay-related priorities in Virginia and Maryland during the General Assembly sessions, preparing the Commission's 2025 Annual Report, communicating the Commission's Federal Budget priorities for FY2027, and coordinating the Pennsylvania Delegation retreat. Commission Members, including Delegate Askew and Representative Rivera, shared highlights from events they took part in which furthered Bay restoration initiatives.

Federal Legislative and Budget Priorities

Director Killius provided updates on elements of H.R.7567 - Farm, Food, and National Security Act of 2026 that would enhance support for agriculture and natural resources programs at community colleges, an area of interest for the Commission. She also provided an outlook for FY2026 and 2027 appropriations progress. The Commission's budget priorities include increased funding for the Chesapeake Bay Program, NRCS Conservation Operations, Bay-related programs at USGS including invasive catfish research, and Chesapeake WILD grants.

Chesapeake Bay Program News

Director Killius shared news from the Chesapeake Bay Program, which included updates on the governance structure of the program, the Executive Council charge for developing recommendations for including federally recognized tribes in the watershed as a partner, and changes to the distribution of funding across the program.

Potomac Interceptor

On January 19th of this year, a section of the Potomac Interceptor—a pipeline conveying wastewater from portions of Maryland and Virginia to Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant in Washington, D.C.—collapsed in Montgomery County, spilling untreated wastewater onto federal land in Maryland. Director Killius provided details on the response to the incident, as well as an analysis of the short- and long-term impacts of the collapse on public health and water quality in the Potomac River and the Bay. In response, members suggested that the Commission should continue to discuss the issue of maintenance of wastewater facilities generally.

THE LATEST BLUE CRAB BENCHMARK STOCK ASSESSMENT

Dr. Mike Wilberg, a fisheries science professor at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, shared the results of the forthcoming 2026 Chesapeake Bay Blue Crab Benchmark Stock Assessment. Dr. Wilberg began by explaining the lifecycle and migration habits of blue crabs in the Bay. He then explained how the Assessment incorporated the most recent science and changes that were made from the previous assessment in 2011. The 2026 Assessment found that overall, blue crab populations have declined but the cause for the declines is not clear. The Assessment examined adult and juvenile abundance, recruitment, and ecosystem pressures on crab populations. The Assessment showed that efforts to protect female crabs seem to have been successful, though abundance of male crabs is below the threshold level at which population management measures should be considered. Over the past several decades, there has been variability in blue crab recruitment, with total recruitment initially responding to regulatory changes made in response to the 2011 Assessment but declining in subsequent years. Compared to 2010, recruitment in 2023 was about 50% lower. No single ecosystem variable was found to be

driving the declines in blue crab populations; predation by invasive blue catfish and overwinter mortality were found to be negatively influencing populations, though no effect was detected from hypoxic conditions in the Bay. The findings from the 2026 Assessment will inform fishery management decisions for blue crabs and provide direction for further research.

Following questions from the Commission, Chair Yaw thanks Dr. Wilberg for sharing his expertise and insights.

MODELING GOOD BEHAVIOR

The Bay Program uses a variety of models to predict the impact of changes in the watershed and management decisions on the pollution load entering the Bay. Bo Williams, the Implementation and Evaluation Team Lead at the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program, gave an overview of this suite of models, including inputs to the models (such as land use data, Census population data, and information on Best Management Practices) and insights the models can provide (including sources of nitrogen, phosphorous, and sediment pollution and how oxygen levels in the Bay respond to different levels of pollution). Then Mr. Williams described how the models are used to set pollution reduction targets for each jurisdiction and track progress toward our Bay restoration goals. Finally, he described the process for updating the models. Small updates are made every 2-4 years, and a substantial update is made every 10 years, with the aim of incorporating the latest science and partner feedback to enhance model accuracy and credibility. The next substantial update, known as the “Phase 7” model, is presently being developed and is expected to be in use beginning in 2028.

Dr. Kaylyn Gootman, the Integrated Analysis Coordinator at the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program, shared an innovative approach to model-based planning. Currently, Bay Program restoration efforts are focused on meeting the water quality standards for dissolved oxygen in the deep channel of the Bay, under the assumption that meeting water quality standards in this hard-to-influence zone will inherently mean that standards in shallower zones have also been met. The proposed new approach, referred to as tiered implementation, aims to prioritize restoration activities that have the greatest potential for improving habitats for living resources in order to achieve short-term, near-shore benefits faster while working toward the same long-term clean water goals. This approach was informed by the Comprehensive Evaluation of System Response, produced by the Bay Program’s Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee. New modeling tools would assess the habitat suitability of the 92 tidal segments of the Bay in order to support targeted restoration investments. Tiered implementation has the potential to accelerate recovery in highly visible parts of the Bay, creating healthier habitats for fish, wildlife, and people.

Greg O’Connell, Fellow at the Chesapeake Bay Commission, shared local perspectives on model-based planning and what steps could be taken to further integrate local input into high-level plans. Common themes that localities expressed interest in included increased and sustained communication between state planners and local stakeholders and the use of water quality monitoring data tiered implementation as a framework for local engagement.

INTERIM ACTIONS

Chair Yaw asked Executive Director Killius to share any interim actions identified by Commission members during the meeting. Members requested that the Commission continue to focus on the needs of our wastewater treatment system and emphasize maintenance and operations, revisit presentations from prior meetings that compared governance across the CBC states, and stay abreast of the changes to the Bay Program governance and efforts to further tribal participation in the partnership.

Chair Yaw thanked Director Killius.

NEW BUSINESS

Chair Yaw asked if there was any new business to come before the Commission, and there was none.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Chair Yaw asked if any members of the public had expressed interest in providing comments. No one had done so.

ADJOURNMENT

The Commission adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

*The next meeting of the full Chesapeake Bay Commission
will be held at Tangier Island, VA, on September 10-11, 2026.*