WHO WE ARE

The Commission is a bipartisan organization whose purpose is to craft and promote legislation and policies to foster the restoration of the watershed. Founded in the 1980s by the legislatures of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission consists of 21 members, including 12 state legislators (five from each state) and nine appointees representing each of the three jurisdictions. The Commission members have led the legislative adoption of hundreds of laws and policies to help restore the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. The Commission also serves as a liaison to the U.S. Congress on policy and budgetary matters related to the restoration of the Bay and its watershed.

OUR MISSION: POLICY FOR THE BAY

The pages that follow provide the highlights of the legislative and policy achievements of the Commission in 2022, reflecting the continued legacy of this unique institution as one of our Nation’s greatest examples of truly informed, collaborative and bipartisan policy work by state legislators. The Commission is essential to its effectiveness in addressing the complex issues that face the multi-jurisdictional Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, the Commission serves as a liaison to the U.S. Congress on policy and budgetary matters related to the restoration of the Bay and its watershed. Fifteen members of the Commission are appointed by the governors of the three states and a citizen representative from each jurisdiction. The Chair of the Commission is appointed by the three governors.

2023 MEMBERS

SUMMARY

The Hon. Tony Bridges, Chair
The Hon. Lynwood Lewis, Jr., Vice-Chair
The Hon. Sara Love, Vice-Chair
Member of the Executive Committee

Rear Admiral Scott Gray
Acting Secretary of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania*

The Hon. Mike Sturla
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

The Hon. Gene Yaw
Pennsylvania State Senate

The Hon. Andrew Wheeler
Pennsylvania Citizen Representative

The Hon. Tony Wilt
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

The Hon. Richard Negrin
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

The Hon. Sara Love
Maryland House of Delegates

The Hon. Thomas “Mac” Middleton
Maryland House of Delegates

The Hon. Emmett Hanger, Jr.
Virginia House of Delegates

The Hon. Sarah Elfreth
Virginia House of Delegates

The Hon. Kerry Benninghoff
Senate of Pennsylvania

The Hon. Andrew Wheeler
Pennsylvania Citizen Representative

The Hon. Scott Martin, Chair

The Hon. Missy Cotter Smasal
Virginia House of Delegates

The Hon. Guy Guzzone
Maryland State Senate

The Hon. David Bulova
Maryland House of Delegates

The Hon. Warren Elliott
Acting Secretary of Environmental Protection, Virginia

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The Hon. David Bulova
Maryland House of Delegates

The Hon. Warren Elliott
Acting Secretary of Environmental Protection, Virginia

Note: One Pennsylvania House member awaits appointment

*Awaiting confirmation at time of publication
WHO WE ARE

WITH A MEMBERSHIP OF LEGISLATORS, STATE OFFICIALS AND PROMINENT citizens from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission is a bipartisan organization whose purpose is to craft and promote legislation and policies to foster the restoration of the watershed.

2023 MEMBERS

✦ The Hon. Scott Martin, Chair ........................................ Senate of Pennsylvania
✦ The Hon. Lynwood Lewis, Jr., Vice-Chair .............................. Senate of Virginia
✦ The Hon. Sara Love, Vice-Chair ........................................ Maryland House of Delegates

The Hon. Kerry Benninghoff ........................................ Pennsylvania House of Representatives
The Hon. Robert Bloxom, Jr. ........................................ Virginia House of Delegates
The Hon. Tony Bridges ........................................ Maryland House of Delegates
The Hon. David Bulova ........................................ Virginia House of Delegates
✦ The Hon. Sarah Elfreth ........................................ Maryland State Senate
Warren Elliott .......................................................... Pennsylvania Citizen Representative
The Hon. Guy Guzzone ........................................ Maryland State Senate
The Hon. Emmett Hanger, Jr. ........................................ Senate of Virginia
The Hon. Josh Kurtz ..................................................... Acting Secretary of Natural Resources, Maryland*
The Hon. Thomas “Mac” Middleton ................................. Maryland Citizen Representative
The Hon. Richard Negrin ........................................ Acting Secretary of Environmental Protection, Pennsylvania*
Missy Cotter Smasal ...................................................... Virginia Citizen Representative
✦ The Hon. Dana Stein ........................................ Maryland House of Delegates
✦ The Hon. Mike Sturla ........................................ Pennsylvania House of Representatives
The Hon. Andrew Wheeler ........................................ Director, Office of Regulatory Management, Virginia
The Hon. Tony Wilt ..................................................... Virginia House of Delegates
The Hon. Gene Yaw ...................................................... Senate of Pennsylvania
Rear Admiral Scott Gray ................................................ Department of Defense Liaison
✦ Member of the Executive Committee

Note: One Pennsylvania House member awaits appointment
*Awaiting confirmation at time of publication
CREATED BY STATUTE IN THE 1980s BY THE LEGISLATURES OF PENNSYLVANIA, Maryland and Virginia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission consists of 21 members who contribute their time, talents and expertise to the work of preserving and restoring the environmental and economic resources of the Bay watershed. Fifteen state legislators (five from each state) partner with three appointees representing each Governor, and a citizen representative from each jurisdiction.

Together, across state and party lines, the members of the Commission anticipate the needs and respond to the challenges presented by the ongoing efforts to preserve and restore the Chesapeake Bay, its tributaries, its communities and its economies, and advise the members of their own general assemblies on matters of watershed-wide concern. The Commission also serves as a liaison to the U.S. Congress on policy and budgetary matters related to the restoration of the Bay and its watershed.

Commission members have led the legislative adoption of hundreds of laws and policies designed to improve the condition of the Bay watershed. As an integral member of the multi-jurisdictional Chesapeake Bay Program partnership, the Commission has been a signatory to every Bay Agreement and provides leadership for many Bay Program initiatives. The remarkably diverse and balanced membership of the Commission is essential to its effectiveness in addressing the complex issues that face the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

The pages that follow provide the highlights of the legislative and policy achievements of the Commission in 2022, reflecting the continued legacy of this unique institution as one of our Nation’s greatest examples of truly informed, collaborative and bipartisan policy work by state legislators.
A Fond Farewell . . . and a Warm Welcome

The Commission welcomes Anna Killius as its new Executive Director. Named a "Champion of the Chesapeake: Next Generation" by the Chesapeake Conservancy, Anna brings her expertise as a lawyer, advocate and former Congressional staffer to the role as well as a fresh perspective on the challenges that lie ahead.

Although her title was Executive Director, Ann Swanson was, in reality, the heart, soul and conscience of the Chesapeake Bay Commission for 34 years. Under her leadership, the Commission became a regionally, nationally, and internationally respected organization.

As the policy guru behind hundreds of laws enacted to improve the Bay and its watershed, as a primary author of the comprehensive Chesapeake 2000 agreement, and as the region's leading advocate for billions of dollars invested by state and federal government for Bay restoration, Ann garnered success after success. It was not only the breadth and depth of Ann's knowledge and experience that led to many of these achievements, but also the passion, tenacity, and optimism that she continually displayed, challenging her colleagues to stretch toward the “outer edge of doable” — an edge that sometimes only Ann had the vision to see. Moreover, the spirit with which Ann worked — bipartisan, respectful, and rooted in a dedication to build on common ground — enabled many, including many Commission members, to work through the tough issues.

Ann's retirement is bittersweet, as she knows that despite all her success, the Bay restoration effort is incomplete. There remain pollution loads to reduce, lands to conserve, forests to plant. Nevertheless, it was during her career — and in many ways attributable to her leadership — that nutrient pollution levels dropped by a third even as the watershed's population grew by 50 percent.

After his own long and distinguished career in Virginia as a member of the House of Delegates, Secretary of Natural Resources and two-time Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, W. Tayloe Murphy, Jr., declared that hiring Ann Swanson to lead the Chesapeake Bay Commission was "the smartest decision I ever made." Legions of Bay leaders, citizens of the watershed, and estuary advocates across the globe would agree.
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Commission members joined Pa. DCNR Sec. Cindy Dunn, Pa. Ag. Sec. Russell Redding and staff of the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay to plant a riparian forest buffer, a key practice for both water quality and climate resiliency.

Pa. Sens. Gene Yaw and Scott Martin celebrate the establishment of standards for turf fertilizer, legislation that had been pending for more than 11 years.


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The Maryland Delegation visited the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies to gain new insight into the decline of juvenile blue crabs.

Pa. Rep. John Hershey sponsored legislation establishing a $154 million agricultural cost-share program in Pennsylvania, whose farms are expected to provide two-thirds of all agricultural reductions Baywide.

Baltimore City resident and Commission member Del. Tony Bridges helped lead discussions on operational issues at Md. wastewater treatment facilities.

Pa. House of Representatives

DAVE HARP

CHRISTINA NOVAK — PA. DCNR
The 2022 session of the Maryland General Assembly proved to be productive for Commission members, who took the lead on a myriad of legislative actions — toxics, enforcement, outdoor recreation, living resource enhancement, environmental finance and climate.

In prior sessions, the members had sponsored legislation to limit use of PFAS-containing fire-fighting foams, but this year took much greater action by putting the state on a course to prohibit PFAS-containing fire-fighting foam, carpet and certain food packaging with direct food contact.

The enforcement capacity of state agencies, particularly Maryland Department of the Environment, has been a concern of the members for some time. Members led the passage of legislation to address the administrative continuation of discharge permits. Additionally, legislation was enacted to regulate and license individuals engaged in the installation and maintenance of on-site wastewater systems — to help ensure good outcomes for both the public and the environment.

The pandemic made clear both the importance of parks and natural spaces for people, and the limitations of existing park infrastructure and capacity. The Great Maryland Outdoors Act addressed these concerns for the Maryland State Park system, by establishing processes for surveying infrastructure and critical maintenance needs, increasing the number of Maryland Park Service full-time employees, and requiring the Department of Natural Resources to develop capital improvement and long-range strategic plans.

On the living resources front, major legislation was passed to help enhance the oyster population, by targeting efforts to improve hatchery capacity and substrate availability. The bill created a grant program to help finance in-state oyster processing facilities that retain shell in Maryland, converted the current tax-credit program for restaurant-based shell recycling to a grant program and expanded the pool of potential participants.

The Conservation Finance Act passed, led by Delegation members, to enhance the ability of private-sector funding for environmental projects, both for climate and water quality benefits. The bill also expanded uses of State Revolving Loan Funds to target new and innovative financing, made possible by the expansion in funding to this program by the federal infrastructure bill.

Finally, the passage of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 moved Maryland into a national leadership position in state climate policy, by setting aggressive emissions targets and providing funding and policy details to achieve them. Also, building on the joint assessment by the Commission, the William & Mary Law School Virginia Coastal Policy Center and the Chesapeake Legal Alliance, legislation passed to establish the Office of Resilience in the Department of Emergency Management and enhancements were made to the Resilient Maryland Revolving Loan Fund.
WITH PASSAGE OF ITS 2022–2023 budget, the Commonwealth made a groundbreaking investment in clean water and natural resource protection. Utilizing $220 million from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), Pennsylvania’s legislature established a new Clean Streams Fund to support non-point source efforts statewide. The Fund will allocate $154 million to a new Agricultural Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) for farmers who implement best management practices. Another new program entitled Clean Water Procurement will receive $22 million to elicit innovative new projects from the private sector, with public support conditional on ongoing water quality benefits.

Other money in the Clean Streams Fund will be distributed to existing programs that support stormwater management planning, tree planting, abandoned mine drainage remediation and technical assistance for agricultural conservation. The ARPA money will expire in 2026, creating urgency to effectively deploy the money and begin the process of finding a long-term source of ongoing revenue.

Legislation to create the Fund and the new ACAP and Procurement programs was introduced in the Senate by Commission members Senator Scott Martin and Senator Gene Yaw along with fellow Senator Dan Laughlin of Erie, demonstrating its statewide impact.

A companion version in the House was introduced by Commission member Representative John Hershey. Ultimately, provisions of these bills were incorporated into the Fiscal Code as part of the final budget package.

The budget also included significant new investment in wastewater and stormwater, with $320 million of ARPA dollars going to an existing H2O PA program. Another $100 million from ARPA was appropriated for a new State Parks and Outdoor Recreation Program. A further $56 million was transferred from the existing Oil & Gas Lease Fund for state park and state forest infrastructure improvements, and funding for conservation districts was tripled to $10 million.

Yet another win was final passage of new standards for the application of fertilizer to turf. Introduced most recently by Senator Yaw, the bill had been considered by the general assembly in six different two-year Sessions. Similar to requirements in Maryland and Virginia, bagged do-it-yourself fertilizer will have limits on nitrogen and phosphorus content, and best management practices such as setbacks and date limits are prescribed.

These wins were the result of strong leadership by the Delegation members who not only introduced the bills, but also facilitated key meetings with legislative leadership and regional voices, including Commission Chair Senator Sarah Elfreth of Maryland.
The Virginia Delegation clarified the designation and role of the Chief Resilience Officer by securing the position within the Office of the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources. The legislation also added provisions related to the role of the Chief Resilience Officer in creating and overseeing the implementation of a Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan and a Virginia Coastal Resilience Master Plan.

The Virginia Delegation also achieved success on some long-term priorities, such as increasing the funding going to Virginia’s Soil and Water Conservation Districts to ensure robust Administration and Operations funding. Virginia’s Soil and Water Conservation Districts provide important technical assistance to farmers and are the purveyors of Virginia’s Agricultural Cost Share Program. The Delegation helped to secure an increase of $3.6 million per year to the districts.

To complement the Fund, the Delegation worked to enhance and clarify the requirements for Virginia’s Flood Protection Master Plan and the Coastal Resilience Master Plan. The legislation created deadlines for plan publication and routine updates. The development of a community outreach and engagement plan to ensure meaningful involvement by affected and vulnerable community residents was also added as a requirement.

The Delegation had been pursuing an enhancement in Virginia’s environmental literacy program for several years. In 2022, the Delegation was successful in creating two positions at the Department of Conservation and Recreation to focus on environmental literacy throughout the Commonwealth. The Delegation worked to ensure the positions would be focused on K-12 environmental literacy and help support our Chesapeake Bay Agreement goal of providing every child with a meaningful watershed educational experience.
A FOND FAREWELL

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Chesapeake Bay Commission
Policy for the Bay