



Chesapeake Bay Program
A Watershed Partnership

Press Release

www.chesapeakebay.net

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Website Launched for Chesapeake Bay Executive Order

WEBSITE WILL INCREASE GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY AND EXPAND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Annapolis, Md. – A website launched today will increase government transparency and expand public participation in President Obama's Executive Order on Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration. The website will serve as the clearinghouse for all Executive Order information, including news, documents and events from the various federal agencies working on new approaches to cleaning up the nation's largest estuary. The public can also provide feedback on the website and use online tools to track Executive Order activities. The website address is <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net>

"President Obama wants real action and real results in restoring and protecting the Chesapeake Bay. The best way to ensure that we meet those goals is to reach out and engage the Bay communities," said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson, who chairs the Federal Leadership Committee overseeing development of the Executive Order. "Executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net is a way for everyone – from concerned parents, environmental advocates, and men and women who make their living on the Bay – to be part of the solution. The website will help promote transparency in our work and accountability to the 17 million residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed."

Through a blog format, a variety of content will be posted on the website in the weeks and months ahead, such as discussions of the key challenges facing the Chesapeake Bay, announcements of upcoming public meetings and events, and documents required by the Executive Order. On September 9, the draft reports on how federal agencies will address topics including water pollution, climate change and public access will be published on the website. By November 9, these reports will be incorporated into a draft strategy for restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay, which also will be available online.

Input from the public is critically important to the federal agencies as the various reports and overall strategy are created. When the draft strategy is released on November 9, the formal public comment period will begin. But until then, feedback can be posted on the website under the Provide Feedback section. The federal agencies will receive any information that the public posts online.

The public is also encouraged to track Executive Order developments by utilizing the RSS feed, Twitter updates and Facebook page. Video and photos will be available on the YouTube and Flickr channels. Access to these tools can be found under the Stay Connected section at <http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net>

EXECUTIVE ORDER BACKGROUND

On May 12, 2009, President Obama signed an Executive Order that recognizes the Chesapeake Bay as a national treasure and calls on the federal government to lead a renewed effort to restore and protect the nation's largest estuary and its watershed.

The Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order established a Federal Leadership Committee that will oversee the development and coordination of reporting, data management and other activities by agencies involved in Bay restoration. The committee will be chaired by the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency and include senior representatives from the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Defense, Homeland Security, Interior, Transportation and others.

These agencies will submit draft reports by September 9, 2009 that make recommendations to:

- Define the next generation of tools and actions to restore water quality in the Bay and describe the changes to be made to regulations, programs and policies to implement these actions.
- Target resources to better protect the Bay and its rivers, particularly in agricultural conservation practices.
- Strengthen storm water management practices for federal facilities and federal land within the Bay watershed and develop a best practices guide for reducing polluted runoff.
- Assess the impacts of climate change on the Bay and develop a strategy for adapting programs and infrastructure to these impacts.
- Expand public access to the Bay and its rivers from federal lands and conserve landscapes of the watershed.
- Expand environmental research, monitoring and observation to strengthen scientific support for decision-making on Bay restoration issues.
- Develop focused and coordinated habitat and research activities.

In preparing the reports, federal agencies will consult with the governments of the seven Bay jurisdictions – Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. By November 9, the Federal Leadership Committee will integrate these reports into a draft strategy for restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay. This draft strategy will be available for public comment and a final strategy will be completed by May 12, 2010.

Beginning in 2010, the Federal Leadership Committee will publish an annual Chesapeake Bay Action Plan that describes how federal funding will be put toward Bay restoration in the upcoming year. It will be accompanied by an Annual Progress Report that reviews current environmental conditions and assesses implementation of the strategy. An independent evaluator will also periodically report on progress toward meeting the goals of the Executive Order.

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