

Dear Management Board and Water Quality Goal Team Members:

I realize a tremendous amount of work has been done to prepare for the final decisions for the 2017 Mid-Point Assessment. But I wanted to send you all a reminder about another very important component of the TMDL program, BMP Verification. We'd like to ensure each jurisdiction is well positioned to report verified practices starting with 2018 progress data and that each of your BMP verification programs is fully functional by the December 31, 2017 deadline agreed upon by the partnership.

Since adopting the *Chesapeake Bay Basin-wide BMP Verification Framework* in October 2014, we've made significant progress addressing the accountability issues raised by the National Academy of Science's independent review of the Chesapeake Bay Program. This progress includes the following:

- The Chesapeake Bay Program partners have used the two years following EPA's approval of each jurisdiction's BMP verification program as the period to ramp up verification programs and make necessary internal adjustments to implement their basin-wide BMP verification framework.
- Working with partners, EPA has revised its Chesapeake Bay Program Office Grant and Cooperative Agreement Guidance to ensure the seven watershed jurisdictions can use funds from their Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grants and Chesapeake Bay Regulatory and Accountability Grants to support BMP tracking, verification and reporting activities and actions.
- The Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) has amended the Partnership's BMP protocol to ensure each BMP expert panel provides stakeholders with recommendations for verification of the BMPs they're investigating.
- All jurisdictions have undertaken in-depth clean-ups of their reported historical BMP data, going back to 1985 in some cases. This long-term record will provide a solid foundation for future BMP verification. The historical BMP information for the partnership's upgraded models accommodates lifespans for each practice and renewals when BMPs are inspected and maintained.
- Stakeholders have worked together to ensure we can use the Chesapeake Bay Program's data exchange network to document verification status of BMPs submitted for accountability.
- All seven watershed jurisdictions developed and EPA approved comprehensive BMP verification quality assurance plans, outlining their verification protocols and procedures as well as documenting plans for continued enhancements.

Now we must reset our sights on ensuring all reported practices are implemented and maintained so they effectively yield nutrient and sediment load reductions. As a reminder, the Partnership agreed through our basin-wide framework that “Only verified practices may be credited after the initial two-year ramp-up period. Starting with the 2018 annual progress reporting cycle (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018), those reported practices, treatments, and technologies for which documentation of verification has not been provided through each jurisdictions’ NEIEN-based report systems may not be credited for nitrogen, phosphorus or sediment pollutant load reductions for that year.”

In working to ensure all jurisdictions are well positioned to document verification for their reported practices – starting with the 2018 model year (2019 for nutrient management practices) – I’m asking that we work together and take the following steps going forward. Jeff Sweeney will take the overall lead for this next phase of the Partnership’s BMP verification programs.

- In the coming weeks, each jurisdiction will receive a more detailed email from Jeff Sweeney outlining specific actions and steps to be taken to ensure there’s a robust operational BMP verification program. These actions and steps will be based on EPA’s feedback provided when we approved each jurisdiction’s respective BMP verification quality assurance plan.
- Jeff will schedule follow-up conference calls with each jurisdiction’s BMP verification coordinator and others directly involved with the BMP verification program – to discuss the current status and plans to address the remaining needs previously identified in EPA’s comments.
- In parallel, the Partnership’s WQGIT source sector workgroup coordinators will work with their respective chairs and members to ensure the October, 2014 BMP verification framework’s documentation of protocols is updated and reflect relevant decisions by each workgroup over the past three years. For example, the Forestry Workgroup has been actively enhancing its verification protocol guidance to better reflect experiences of its members. Also, the Agriculture Workgroup has approved a number of new BMP verification protocols brought forth by its jurisdictional members which are now available for others to use.
- The Partnership’s BMP Verification Committee will be reconvened in the first quarter of CY2018 to discuss how stakeholders will proceed forward carrying out its 2018 reporting year commitments to quality BMP tracking, verifying, and reporting. Where applicable, the committee will identify where long-term resource investments are needed to sustain the jurisdictions’ BMP verification programs. The objective is a long-term commitment to implementing effective verification and, in turn, improving water quality. The Committee will report out its findings and recommendations to the WQGIT and Management Board for further action and decisions on behalf of the Partnership.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring every practice, program, and treatment technology – in which public and private funds were invested – yield the intended nutrient and

sediment pollutant load reductions to your jurisdiction's local waterways and our collective downstream rivers and tidal waters.

Nick DiPasquale, Chair

CBP Management Board