

Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership Review of the Draft Phase III WIP Planning Targets

On October 30-31, 2017, the Water Quality Goal Implementation Team (WQGIT) will be seeking the approval of the Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) to release the draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) planning targets for a four-month Partnership review period. The Phase III WIP planning targets represent the major state-basin nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment load reduction targets needed in order to meet the jurisdictions' respective Chesapeake Bay water quality standards. These planning targets, once finalized, will be used to inform the development of the Phase III WIPs in 2018 and 2019.

The Phase III WIP planning targets were developed using the Partnership's Phase 6 suite of modeling tools and the Partnership-approved planning target methodology, similar to the methodology used in the Phase I and Phase II WIPs. The Partnership will have four months (November 1 – February 28, 2018) to review and exercise the draft Phase III WIP planning targets to determine if any adjustments to the draft planning targets are needed in order to finalize the Phase III WIP planning targets by March 2018. It should be noted that any adjustments made to a state-basin planning target will need to be cumulatively offset in all of the remaining state-basin planning targets so that the Baywide pollutant loads for nitrogen and phosphorus are maintained. During the four-month review period, jurisdictions should consider the following actions:

- **Analysis of the level of effort and cost** to achieve the draft Phase III WIP planning targets.
- **Analysis of the effects of accounting for Conowingo Dam and climate change to levels of effort** as expressed by the draft Phase III WIP planning targets, and how and where best to address any additional load reductions needed as a result of these changed conditions.
 - The decisions of who will be impacted and by how much will be decided by the PSC on October 30-31, 2017.
- **Assess the need for exchanges of nitrogen and/or phosphorus loads** between a jurisdiction's major river basins using specific exchange ratios, as long as the exchanges still result in attainment of all water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay.
 - The Partnership's Modeling Workgroup will develop exchange ratios that will be used to inform the basin-to-basin exchanges within each jurisdiction.
- **Assess the need for exchanges of nitrogen for phosphorus or phosphorus for nitrogen** within a jurisdiction's major river basin, using specific exchange ratios, as long as the exchanges still result in attainment of all water quality standards in the Chesapeake Bay.
 - The Partnership's Modeling Workgroup will develop exchange ratios that will be used to inform the N-to-P and P-to-N exchanges within each basin.
- **Determine if certain discretionary adjustments¹ to the planning targets** are justified (otherwise known as "special cases"), similar to what was provided for in the Phase I WIP planning target process.
 - E.g., allocate a certain amount of additional nutrient and/or sediment pounds to a particular state, as long as water quality standards are still met in the Chesapeake Bay.
 - The **deadline for submitting proposed special cases**, along with justification, to the Partnership for consideration is **February 28, 2018**. Jurisdictions are encouraged to initiate dialogue

Understanding that jurisdictions may have different timelines for addressing these actions, some additional analysis that jurisdictions may want to consider during this review period for the draft planning targets include:

- **Preliminary development of measurable, local planning goals** below the major state-basin level.

¹ https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2014-12/documents/cbay_final_tmdl_section_6_final_0.pdf

- As reflected in the [final recommendations](#) of the Partnership's Local Planning Goals Task Force and EPA's [Interim Phase III WIP expectations](#) document, jurisdictions have the flexibility to determine how to define "local" and how best to express local planning goals in their respective jurisdiction.
- **Apply the results of the geographic isolation runs** to help inform implementation planning and targeting.
 - The Partnership's Modeling Workgroup will run a series of geographic isolation runs², as part of the development of the draft Phase III WIP planning targets, using methods that are consistent with those used to form the previous Phase II WIP planning targets.
 - These geographic isolation runs will update and refine the quantification of how nutrient inputs to the tidal Bay from different locations influence water quality.
- **Evaluate potential changes needed to a jurisdiction's Phase I and Phase II WIP source sector goals**, taking into account the following considerations (this list is not exhaustive):
 - Programmatic and numeric implementation progress to date;
 - New scientific understandings and data gathered from the Bay TMDL's midpoint assessment; and/or
 - Observed short- and long-term watershed and tidal water quality monitoring data and trends.
- **Evaluate potential changes needed to existing Chesapeake Bay TMDL allocations.**

The Chesapeake Bay Program Office and EPA have a number of resources to assist the jurisdictions in this four-month review period of the draft Phase III WIP planning targets. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Technical staff resources to work with the jurisdictions as they (1) analyze the results of the geographic isolation runs conducted for each of the 92 Chesapeake Bay segments and (2) conduct exchanges of nitrogen and phosphorus within and between their state-basins. This analyses will be done through the Partnership's Phase 6 Watershed Model and Water Quality Sediment Transport Model. EPA will assist with coordinating and facilitating, when necessary, these efforts amongst the jurisdictions to ensure that any proposed exchanges will result in achieving all jurisdictions' Chesapeake Bay water quality standards.
- Assist with any programmatic and/or numeric analyses to understand the impacts of adjusting source sector targets and/or goals from Phase I and Phase II implementation levels.
- Technical assistance through trainings and webinars – particularly on the use of the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) – to help partners estimate nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment reductions associated with proposed management actions (including local planning goals).
- Expertise on how findings from observed monitoring trends and corresponding explanations could help with (1) nitrogen and phosphorus exchanges and (2) local planning goal development.

Timeline³ for Reviewing and Finalizing the Phase III WIP Planning Targets

- **December 19-20, 2017:** PSC 2-day retreat to seek final decisions on Conowingo, climate change, and accounting for growth, and approval of draft Phase III WIP planning targets for distribution to other partners and stakeholders
- **December 22, 2017:** Release of draft Phase III WIP planning targets

² As part of the Phase III WIP development process in 2018, the Partnership's Modeling Workgroup will run an additional series of geographic isolation runs to continue to understand the relative effectiveness of each contributing area of the Chesapeake Bay watershed on dissolved oxygen and water clarity in each of the 92 Chesapeake Bay segments, and to identify those Chesapeake Bay segments that are most vulnerable to nonattainment.

³ The PSC approved revisions to the Midpoint Assessment schedule on October 3, 2017.

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- **December 22, 2017 – April 20, 2018:** Partnership's review of the draft Phase III WIP planning targets
- **April 20, 2018:** Any proposed changes to the draft Phase III WIP planning targets, including special case requests, due to the Chesapeake Bay Program Office
- **Late April 2018:** PSC approval of the final Phase III WIP planning targets with any agreed-to special cases
- **May 7, 2018:** Release of the final Phase III WIP planning targets to inform Phase III WIP development