



## CBF's FY 2020 Federal Appropriations Request: *Congressional Leadership for the Chesapeake Bay*

Thanks to vital Congressional leadership, states and federal agencies have been working together through the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership for decades. In 2014, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, Delaware, New York, the District of Columbia, and the federal government redoubled their effort and signed a new Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The Agreement incorporated the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint – the federal pollution targets for the Bay and the state plans to meet them by 2025– as well as additional commitments to restore habitat, improve fisheries, and increase public access, to name a few. It is working: Dead zones are getting smaller; Bay grasses are increasing; and local economies are improving.

Unfortunately, as we make progress, we are dealing with new threats. Last year, record rains flushed enormous amounts of pollution into local waterways and, as a result, the Bay's health dropped for the first time in 10 years. Combined with added pollution loads and the ever-emerging effects of climate change, these challenges require accelerated efforts to restore the Bay. That includes continued—and in some cases **increased**—funding to the following programs that are critical to the Bay's progress. Thankfully, the Bay has historically received bi-partisan support and funding. Now, with the 2025 deadline approaching, it is time to go a step further.

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**

*CBF requests increased funding to the Chesapeake Bay Program and the State Revolving Loan Fund and level funding to Section 319 and Section 106 grants*

### **Chesapeake Bay Program (CWA §117)**

*CBF requests an increase in funding from \$73M to \$90M*

The Chesapeake Bay Program is the glue that holds this historic clean-up partnership together. This program, created under President Ronald Reagan to support the voluntary Chesapeake Bay Agreement, is a unique regional partnership that brings together leaders and experts from a vast range of agencies and organizations. Funds are used to coordinate cross-state science, research, modeling, monitoring, and data collection. Each state uses this information to plan, track, and adapt their restoration activities to meet their pollution reduction goals. Over 60 percent of program funds go to states, primarily through grant programs that leverage private investment for restoration activities. Funding has been

appropriated at \$73 million for the last several years. CBF advocates an increase in this funding to \$90 million and recommends that the additional \$17 million be used to: (1) expand two grant programs (one that goes toward improving water quality and habitat of small, local waterways and a second that supports innovative and market-based approaches to reducing pollution); (2) assist local governments in reducing pollution; and (3) increase assistance to priority watersheds that will provide the most cost-effective pollution reductions.

### **State and Tribal Assistance Grants/Clean Water State Revolving Fund**

*CBF requests a minimum funding level of at least \$1.34B*

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for the water quality infrastructure projects critical to Bay Watershed Agreement success. In addition to wastewater treatment plant upgrades, this fund can help local governments finance critical stormwater management projects. As such, funding should be **increased** and any infrastructure bill should include increased amounts allocated toward these types of projects.

### **State and Tribal Assistance Grants/Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (CWA§319)**

*CBF requests level funding at \$179M*

Nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In the Bay Agreement, states have planned to implement agricultural, urban, and residential best management practices (BMPs) to reduce nonpoint source pollution. Section 319(h) grants help them locate and partially finance these projects and leverage other local and private funding sources. States also independently provide project management and technical assistance to local stakeholders to install these practices.

### **State and Tribal Assistance Grants/Pollution Control Grants (CWA §106)**

*CBF requests level funding at \$231M*

These grants help states in the Bay watershed manage the federal water pollution permit program, or National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ( NPDES). Under the Clean Water Act, it is unlawful to discharge any pollutant into federal waters without a NPDES permit. Without sufficient funding, this permit process gets bogged down, resulting in business losses and reduced permit monitoring and enforcement.

## **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)**

In response to President Obama's 2009 Executive Order 13508, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), along with other state and federal partners, developed the 2012 Native Oyster Restoration Master Plan. The Master Plan identified large-scale, sanctuary-based oyster restoration as a primary strategy to recover the ecological function of oysters in Chesapeake Bay. In the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, Maryland, Virginia, and federal partners, including USACE, reaffirmed their commitment to large-scale oyster restoration by setting the goal to restore "10 tributaries by 2025" and ensure their protection. The USACE partnership with Maryland and Virginia is vital to meet the tributary goals for oyster restoration in the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Agreement. USACE provides significant technical expertise, logistical coordination, and funding for construction of oyster restoration projects in Maryland and Virginia. USACE also provides funding for long-term monitoring programs that are critical to evaluating the success of these projects.

### **Construction, General – Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration, Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery, Maryland and Virginia (Section 704(b))**

*CBF requests funding of \$5M*

The Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery Program is critical for implementing native oyster protection and restoration strategies to meet the Bay Agreement goal of restoring oyster populations in 10 Bay tributaries by 2025. Section 704(b) funding specifically supports the construction and monitoring of large-scale oyster restoration projects in Maryland and Virginia. This section supported the majority of USACE's work on oyster restoration since 2011. Until funding was zeroed out in FY17, recent funding levels were up to \$5 million annually. No funding has been provided for this program since FY17. Previously, budget language has been included directing USACE to request funding for this section, yet it still was not included in recent budgets. Section 704(b) was recently reauthorized in the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act of 2016, which increased authorization for this program from \$60 million to \$100 million. More than \$50 million in authorization remains under this section.

### **Chesapeake Bay Environmental Protection and Restoration –Section 510–**

*CBF requests funding of \$5M*

Section 4010 of the 2014 Water Resources Reform and Development Act (WRRDA) directed USACE to conduct a comprehensive plan detailing the full suite of activities necessary to meet all the goals of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement and Executive Order 13508. The Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Plan was completed in spring 2018 and is being finalized. The watershed assessment will result in a comprehensive master plan for restoring, preserving, and protecting the Chesapeake Bay Ecosystem that aligns with existing federal, state, and local plans and the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. The plan

identified more than 300 projects in need of funding, including large-scale oyster restoration projects, which the plan authorizes. *USACE's aim is "to identify environmental restoration actions that can be implemented and to synchronize similar agency efforts taking place across the region in order to more efficiently and collaboratively address the issues at hand."* Funding through Section 510 appropriations is critical to implementing this integrated water resources restoration plan.

## **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**

*CBF requests the Maximum Funding Authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill*

Through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA works with farmers to help them plan and install voluntary practices on their farms that protect water quality. In the Chesapeake Bay Agreement, USDA committed to work with farmers in the Bay watershed to install voluntary conservation practices on four million acres of agricultural working lands by 2025. This commitment supports every state in the Chesapeake Bay watershed –all of which have ambitious goals to reduce the flow of valuable nutrients and sediment from agricultural lands into the waterways.

Congress passed the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018, or 2018 Farm Bill, into law on December 20, 2018. The 2018 Farm Bill contains several key provisions that were a priority for CBF, including amendments to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and to the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). To ensure that these programs are put to the best use in the Chesapeake Bay region, the ***maximum amount of funding contemplated by Congress should be appropriated.***

### **NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Through the EQIP program, USDA shares the costs for installing water pollution-reducing practices on farms, a key element of all state Blueprint plans to meet their 2025 pollution reduction goals. On average, 40 percent of Bay watershed farmers who want to install these practices are turned away by NRCS because cost-share funding is exhausted. Funding for this program was increased under the 2018 Farm Bill to over \$9.175 billion over five years, and it should be fully funded.

### **NRCS Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**

The CSP helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resource concerns like those in the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint.

### **NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)**

The RCPP is a program that funds conservation-focused partnerships. Within this program, the Chesapeake Bay watershed has been designated as a Critical

Conservation Area (CCA) and is eligible to receive a portion of CCA funding for projects that help reduce nutrient and sediment runoff that impacts the Chesapeake Bay and the local rivers and streams that feed it.

### **USFSA Conservation Reserve Program/ Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)**

Through this program, the federal government partners with Bay states and land owners to support installation of a key practice in states' Blueprints: riparian buffers. These buffers are one of the most cost-efficient and effective methods for reducing pollution to—and improving the health of—local rivers and streams in the Bay.

### **U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI)**

*CBF requests level funding for DOI, USGS programs*

Within DOI, the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) conducts the watershed-wide research, assessment, monitoring, and modeling that helps Chesapeake Bay partners make informed management decisions. These data and analyses are critical for federal, state, and academic science partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program to plan the best stewardship of natural resources and taxpayer dollars.

### **USGS Chesapeake Bay Program Activities**

USGS Chesapeake Bay Program activities are conducted under five mission areas and appropriations accounts: Ecosystems, Water, Environmental Health, Climate Change and Land Use, and Core Science Systems. The total crosscut of Bay activities within these programs is approximately \$12.85 million. Proposed reductions to these accounts will eliminate the vast majority of USGS Chesapeake Bay activities and will only fund monitoring activities. CBF requests level funding for these programs.

### **National Parks Service—Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Trails Program**

*CBF requests an increase in funding to \$3M*

This program was authorized by Congress in 1998 and is an important tool to connect people with the Chesapeake Bay watershed as both a natural and historical resource. Throughout the history of the program, it has contributed to more than 300 projects in the watershed through both financial and technical assistance. We are requesting an increase from \$2.02 million in FY19 to \$3 million in FY20 to: (1) expand Chesapeake tourism through visitor hubs, (2) increase the number of programs that target getting children and visitors outside, and (3) advance the access goals around connecting more people to the Chesapeake Bay.

### **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)**

*CBF requests continued support for NOAA restoration and education programs and enhanced funding for the National Sea Grant College Program*

NOAA is a key federal partner in the implementation of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. NOAA contributes invaluable restoration and education programs and technical assistance through the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Program Office and oversees the highly valuable native oyster protection and restoration strategy. NOAA also provides coordinated and effective management of fisheries in the Chesapeake Bay region through its partnership with, and support of, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission. These programs are important to restore the Bay ecosystem and bring the Bay back to life.

### **NOAA Habitat Conservation and Restoration and the Chesapeake Bay Office**

*CBF requests increased funding at \$61.4M*

Within the Habitat Conservation and Restoration program, the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office supports the Bay habitat monitoring, restoration, and protection goals of the Chesapeake Bay Program. Scientific data from this office is critical for the management and restoration of oysters, blue crab, striped bass, and other ecologically and commercially important species; and for planning, management, and assessment of Chesapeake Bay Program priorities. Within Habitat Conservation and Restoration, at least \$2M should be provided to support NOAA's contributions to large-scale oyster restoration actions in Chesapeake Bay, which are critical to achieving the goals of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

### **NOAA Office of Education/BWET program**

*CBF requests funding at \$7.5 million*

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay Office implements the Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET Chesapeake) program, which offers students and teachers the opportunity to learn about the scientific value and wonder of the Bay ecosystem firsthand. It is active in schools throughout the watershed.

### **National Sea Grant College Program**

*CBF requests increased funding at \$93.5M*

Sea Grant programs carry out vital research in the Chesapeake Bay. Activities include: university research on oyster diseases, oyster restoration, and oyster-related human health risks; research on the biology, prevention, and forecasting of harmful algal blooms; research, education, and extension services and activities focused on coastal resilience; university research on sustainable aquaculture. It also funds the Knauss Marine Policy Fellowship, which places Fellows in Congressional offices with a demonstrated interest. Increased funding for Sea

Grant programs will support workforce development, advancement of shellfish aquaculture industries, and enhanced climate resilience of coastal communities