



February 2016

**CBF'S FY 2016 FEDERAL APPROPRIATIONS RESULTS:
*Despite Significant Threats,
Bay Delegation in Congress Maintains Support for
Clean Water Blueprint***

*The Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint is an interdependent collaboration between federal and state governments. Many federal programs provide critical support for states as they work to meet their Blueprint goals. CBF is **the only** organization advocating in Washington D.C. to ensure Congress and the Administration provide consistent annual federal funding for Blueprint-critical programs. In addition, CBF works to increase agency authorizations and funding for the Blueprint where there is the potential to provide more impact. This advocacy is coordinated with and complements our work with state governments in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania to drive full Blueprint implementation by 2025 and is described below along with our specific FY16 appropriations requests and results. Overall, the Bay Delegation in Congress successfully maintained FY16 federal funding for programs significant to the Blueprint.*

In the federal government, the Blueprint is supported by substantial programs in the following agencies: the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA); the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); the U.S. Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA); the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD), Navy and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE); the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS); and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Department and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS). ***CBF has targeted federal advocacy specifically at federal agencies and programs with the most significant impact on water pollution reductions in the Blueprint*** – either directly or through programs which help sustain public support. Advocacy occurs year-round in the Executive Office (Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Management and Budget), the Federal Agencies and in Congress.

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Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

EPA coordinates the federal strategy for protecting and restoring water quality in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, which includes overseeing federal and state Blueprint commitments and outcomes. Agency programs provide invaluable technical assistance, grants, and loans, which are critical for State Blueprint success. Core programs include the Chesapeake Bay Program, Clean Water State Revolving Fund, and State and Tribal Assistance Grants.

Chesapeake Bay Program (CWA §117)

CBF requested \$73M, Congress funded at \$73M

Through this program, EPA helps watershed states meet their Blueprint goals. EPA collaborates with states and other federal agencies and coordinates the science, research, modeling, support services, monitoring, data collection, and other activities essential to Blueprint implementation. The agency also administers a technical assistance and grants program that enables nonprofit organizations, state and local governments, colleges, universities, and interstate agencies to assist with Blueprint implementation. This year, the program will also produce the first ever mandatory Cross Cut Budget, detailing both federal and state budgets and expenditures on the Blueprint and will be monitored by the first-ever Inspector General. The President's budget request at \$70M was not sufficient to fund these new mandatory initiatives and would have caused reductions in other critical programs. The appropriations committees agreed with CBF's position and provided \$3M in additional funding.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)

CBF requested \$1,448.9M, Congress funded at \$1,393.9M (\$277.9M above the President's budget)

The CWSRF program is an important a federal-state partnership that provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects, particularly those in State WIPs. This program is highly successful and enjoys widespread bipartisan support. CBF successfully advocated to expand the activities eligible for assistance and now communities can obtain loans for projects to manage, reduce, treat, or recapture stormwater or subsurface drainage water (2014 WRDA). As states complete their Blueprint-driven wastewater treatment plant upgrades, they will be able focus investments on stormwater projects. This year, CBF asked Congress to provide level funding for this program even though the President cut it dramatically in his budget. Congress was ultimately able to provide \$277.9M above the President's request, but not quite at former levels.

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State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (CWA §319)

CBF requested \$164.9M, Congress funded at \$164.9M

Nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, where 92 segments are impaired. In the Blueprint, states have planned to implement agricultural, urban, and residential best management practices (BMPs) (such as failing on-site septic systems) to reduce nonpoint source pollution. They use Section 319(h) grants to help fund these projects. States also independently provide project management and technical assistance to local stakeholders to install these practices.

Pollution Control Grants (CWA §106)

CBF requested \$249.2M, Congress funded at \$230.9M

Under the Clean Water Act, point source pollution into US waters is prohibited unless a federal permit to pollute is granted. Most states manage the federal permitting program for federal waters in their jurisdiction, and these grants help states run robust programs. Without sufficient funding, this permit process gets bogged down, resulting in business losses and reduced permit monitoring and enforcement. An effective permit program is the backbone of the Blueprint.

U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Through the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA), USDA works with farmers to help them plan and install practices on their farms that improve the soil and protect water quality. In 2010, the Agency committed to work with farmers in the Bay watershed to install voluntary conservation practices on 4 million acres of agricultural working lands by 2025. This commitment supports every state in the Chesapeake Bay watershed --- all of which have ambitious goals in their Blueprints to reduce the flow of valuable nutrients and sediment from agricultural lands into the waterways. CBF advocates for federal funding to allow USDA and watershed states to meet their conservation goals.

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Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

CBF requested no limitations, Congress limited by \$209M

The EQIP program provides cost-share assistance to farmers to help them install basic on-farm practices included in state Blueprints. Bay states receive a portion of funds from this national program and focus the funds on priority practices like those that improve water quality. In all watershed states, demand for this program exceeds supply. Full funding for this program will also ensure that Farm Bill conservation programs that derive funding as a percentage of EQIP are fully funded. CBF has joined with a national coalition of conservation group to advocate for the end of the practice of limiting the annual funding which is otherwise automatically provided to this and other key conservation programs as intended by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

CBF requested no limitations to EQIP and CSP, Congress limited EQIP, which reduced funding for this program

The RCPP is a new program that streamlines several Farm Bill conservation programs – including the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative – into one single program. It is funded in large part by a percentage of the EQIP and CSP programs. 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. The inaugural selection of projects within the Chesapeake Bay CCA received \$19 million. Under this program, CBF partners with USDA to work with farmers in high priority areas to implement practices in support of state WIPs.

Conservation Stewardship Program

CBF requested no limitations, Congress concurred

The Conservation Stewardship Program helps agricultural producers maintain and improve their existing conservation systems and adopt additional conservation activities to address priority resources concerns. Participants earn CSP payments for conservation performance - the higher the performance, the higher the payment. Like the EQIP program, the CSP program is a significant source of funding for the RCPP program and CBF joined with a national coalition of conservations groups to advocate for the end of the practice of limiting the program's automatic annual funding. Together with this coalition, we achieved a very significant victory: this program will be fully funded in FY16 as intended by Congress in the 2014 Farm Bill.

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National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)

NOAA is a key federal partner in the Chesapeake Bay restoration initiative. The Agency contributes invaluable restoration and education programs and technical assistance through the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Program Office, and the highly valuable native oyster protection and restoration strategy. The agency 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.

The NOAA BWET program:

CBF requested the program continue at NOAA and be funded at \$7.2M, Congress concurred and funded BWET at \$7.2M and the NOAA Education Program at \$14.431M

NOAA's Chesapeake Bay office has historically and successfully implemented the Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET Chesapeake) program, which offers students and teachers the opportunity to learn about the value and wonder of the Bay ecosystem first hand. Slated by the Administration to be discontinued at NOAA, CBF has successfully advocated for three years for Congress to reject the President's proposal and fully fund the BWET program and the NOAA education program.

The Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission

CBF requested robust support, Congress concurred with \$33.470M for Regional Councils and Fisheries Commissions

NOAA is a key source of support to the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC). The ASMFC is a deliberative, cooperative body of representatives appointed by member states. Through ASMFC, Atlantic states coordinate the management of their near shore fishery resources that "know no boundaries." The council designs and approves Atlantic fishery management plans, which it then submits to the Secretary of Commerce for approval.

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Oyster Protection and Restoration

CBF supported the President's request at \$1.97M, Congress concurred with \$1.97M.

NOAA has been instrumental in implementing a native oyster protection and restoration strategy for the Chesapeake Bay to meet the goal, mandated in the Executive Order, to restore oyster populations in 20 Bay tributaries by 2025. Reef construction and seeding for oysters, that filter water when they feed, directly improves water clarity – an important element in achieving state water quality goals in the Chesapeake Bay Blueprint.

National Sea Grant College Program

Funded \$64M

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.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)

Poplar Island Project

CBF supported the President's request at \$26M, Congress concurred with \$26M

This increment is to pay for the expansion of Poplar Island to the north. The project will add considerable habitat acreage to the existing island with a design that focuses on fish habitat improvement as it will integrate with natural oyster bars in the area. The project will also extend the useful life of Poplar Island as a dredged material management site, keeping the Port of Baltimore open for business well into the mid-century. It was recently awarded the Innovation in Sustainable Engineering Award from the American Society of Civil Engineers.

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Chesapeake Bay Water Resources and Restoration Comprehensive Plan

Funded \$250,000

The Comprehensive Plan will include existing Federal (Including DOD), State and local plans and will address the most recent Chesapeake Bay Agreement commitments and Executive Order 13508.

Department of Interior (DOI)

DOI programs support the essential recovery of watershed habitat, sustain fish and wildlife, restore water quality, conserve land, and increase public access to natural lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Projects such as wetlands and riparian buffer restoration, water quality monitoring and grant programs directly contribute to Blueprint implementation.

Habitat Conservation—Coastal Programs

CBF requested \$13.375M, Congress funded at \$13.375

The Coastal Program is a voluntary habitat conservation program run through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which includes 24 priority coastal ecosystems, including the Chesapeake Bay. Projects funded through the Coastal Program leverage, on average, eight non-federal dollars for every federal dollar spent. Projects support the recovery of threatened and endangered species, working with both private and public lands to conserve habitat. The Coastal Program also works closely with Landscape Conservation Cooperatives.

Cooperative Landscape Conservation

CBF requested \$17.869M, Congress funded at \$12.988

Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC's) are funded through the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Cooperative Landscape Conservation program. The North Atlantic LCC is an applied science and management partnership that works to protect environmental benefits for the Chesapeake Bay region. LCC's provide critical data to ensure the continued health of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed.

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Land and Water Conservation Fund—Rivers of the Chesapeake

Funded \$10.492M

The Chesapeake Bay Program Executive Council submitted a formal request to Congress to support the President’s budget request for the Rivers of the Chesapeake Landscape Collaborative. It was funded at \$10.49M. *Text from the President’s Budget Request:* ‘The LWCF Collaborative process is an important component of stakeholder engagement with headwater communities and will enhance federal-state collaboration as part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The 2016 budget proposes \$10 million in current funding and \$23 million in permanent funding. LWCF investments will protect high-value forests that contribute to water quality, add dozens of new public access sites, protect a network of critical stopover sites and uplands for migrating birds, and expand brook trout habitat. Many of the projects will protect important cultural and historical sites including Harriet Tubman’s birthplace, important Native American landscapes, and civil war battlefield sites. Projects in all of the focus areas for this proposal will further expand public access to Bay and its rivers. Increasing access to the water is a priority for local governments. Public water access is critical to promoting watershed stewardship and providing opportunities to engage in the great outdoors.’

DOI geography-specific restoration projects in the Bay:

Bureau of Land Management:

Nanjemoy (MD): \$465,000

Fish Wildlife Service:

Rappahannock (VA): \$1,600,000

Blackwater (MD): \$1,511,000

Rappahannock (VA): \$3,890,000

James River National Wildlife Refuge (NWR):

\$950,000

Blackwater NWR: \$1,900,000

National Trail System:

John Smith National Trail: \$3,530,000



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