



CHESAPEAKE BAY FOUNDATION
Saving a National Treasure

08 September 2025

Citizens Advisory Council
PO Box 8459
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8459

RE: CBF Comments regarding the Cuffs Run Project; 09 September 2025 Meeting

Dear Members of the Citizens Advisory Council,

I am writing to provide the Chesapeake Bay Foundation's (CBF) comments regarding the "Cuffs Run Project" presentation at the 09 September 2025 Citizens Advisory Council (CAC) meeting.

Cuffs Run is more than a stream. It is a gorge of cascading waterfalls, mature forests, and working farmland that has sustained families for generations. It is a place where children learned to explore the outdoors, where arrowheads were unearthed while planting pumpkins, and where history whispers through the valley like a living memory. It is a place of extraordinary natural beauty and deep human connection in eastern York County.

But this place — this sanctuary — is under threat.

The proposed pumped storage hydroelectric facility would flood hundreds of acres of farmland and forest, destroy unique and irreplaceable habitat, and displace nearly 40 families. These are not just properties on a map. These are homes filled with memories, with laughter, with legacy.

Nick Kowalczyk, whose land lies in the heart of the project, said: "It will be destroying 300 acres of land. Almost all of those acres are farmland. Crops are planted and harvested here every year." He also reminded us that this valley is a vital stopover for migratory birds flying from Nova Scotia to South America. "Just because they can't speak doesn't mean they don't have a life," he said. "They too need to live along with this world that we're also sharing with them."

Renna Horton, just 18 years old, grew up on one of the directly affected properties. She told us, "I learned how to fish, I learned how to do everything on my property... I found Indian artifacts, arrowheads while plowing our garden."

Her voice trembled as she said, “It makes us feel like we are drowning. This is mental agony. I’m young and I can’t even go to sleep at night sometimes thinking about how I might not have a house to sleep in at some point.”

This is not just about energy production. It’s about empathy. It’s about justice. It’s about preserving a place where the moon still rises over quiet fields, where the same stars shine down on generations past and present, and where the land still speaks — if we’re willing to listen.

CBF opposes the proposal because it would irreversibly damage the ecologically rich Cuffs Run area by flooding 580 acres of forest, farmland, and conservation lands. This destruction would eliminate critical wildlife habitats and undermine Pennsylvania’s commitments under the Chesapeake Bay Agreement. This is the wrong project in the wrong place, and it threatens water quality, biodiversity, and public access to a cherished natural landscape.

The partnership to Save Cuffs Run includes: the Lancaster Conservancy, Susquehanna National Heritage Area, Keystone Trails Association, Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Farm & Natural Lands Trust of York County, the Cuffs Run Alliance, and CBF.

Let us not trade generational homes for concrete reservoirs. Let us not drown heritage in infrastructure. Let us instead protect Cuffs Run — for the families who live there, for the wildlife that migrates through it, and for the future generations who deserve to know what untouched beauty looks like.

It is our understanding that the CAC will be privy to an in-depth presentation from the partnership working to protect Cuffs Run at a subsequent meeting. We respectfully urge the Council to listen closely to their presentation and consider the profound ecological and human impacts of this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "HL Campbell, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a horizontal line drawn underneath the name.

HL Campbell, III

Director of Science Policy and Advocacy, Chesapeake Bay Foundation