

Chesapeake Bay Program

DEP's Chesapeake Bay Office is tasked with coordination of activities to implement the [Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) to restore water quality in local waterways and the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay Office also coordinates efforts surrounding the implementation of the [2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement](#), which consists of five themes with 10 goals that will advance the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Working with a large and diverse group of partners and stakeholders, DEP has developed a Bay restoration strategy comprised of several short, mid, and long-term recommendations, aimed at augmenting the approach to water quality improvements in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. This strategy is a collaborative effort between DEP, Department of Agriculture, and Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, along with others in the design, development, and implementation of restoration strategies.

There are six essential recommendations laid out in this strategy:

- Put high-impact, low-cost Best Management Practices (BMPs) on the ground and quantify undocumented BMPs in watersheds impaired by agriculture or stormwater.
- Improve reporting, record keeping, and data systems to provide better and more accessible documentation.
- Address nutrient reduction by meeting EPA's goal of inspecting 10 percent of farms in the watershed, ensuring development and use of manure management and agricultural erosion and sediment control plans, and enforcement for non-compliance.
- Identify legislative, programmatic, or regulatory changes to provide the additional tools and resources necessary to meet federal pollution reduction goals by 2025.
- Obtain additional resources for water quality improvement.
- Establish a Chesapeake Bay Office to coordinate the development, implementation, and funding of the commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay efforts.

The strategy relies on a mix of technical and financial assistance for farmers, expanded data gathering and technology, improved program coordination and capacity, and – only when necessary – stronger enforcement and compliance measures.

In 2010, EPA established the [Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load \(TMDL\)](#) to restore clean water in the Chesapeake Bay. The TMDL requires Pennsylvania to make specific reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution and reach those goals by 2025. Pennsylvania is also required to develop a series of three “Watershed Implementation Plans” (WIPs) that specify how Pennsylvania will accomplish these pollution reduction goals. Pennsylvania developed its [Phase 1 WIP](#) in 2010; its [Phase 2 WIP](#) in 2012; and submitted its [Phase 3 WIP](#) to EPA in August 2019. For more detailed

information on DEP's Phase 3 WIP, go to [Healthy Waters PA](#) . For more information on EPA's TMDL, click [here](#).

Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay Office was established within DEP in early 2016 to assure the proper development, implementation, and coordination of the Commonwealth's Chesapeake Bay and local restoration efforts and to administer DEP's Chesapeake Bay Program grants.

Phase 3 WIP Efforts

To more fully account for all local water quality activities, benefits, improvements, and planned activities, EPA and its state partners added a new component to the Phase 3 WIP process - a local, bottom-up approach focusing on local partnerships.

Pennsylvania has recognized that local engagement throughout the planning and implementation phases is a critical component of a successful Phase 3 WIP. Pennsylvania's nitrogen and phosphorus reduction targets are broken down into local planning goals for each county. Added together (reductions from all 43 counties), these local pollution reductions will help Pennsylvania reach its Chesapeake Bay clean water targets.

Pennsylvania is making progress toward its clean water goals:

- Twenty-five years before the TMDL, in 1985, the Susquehanna River delivered nearly 123 million pounds of nitrogen and just over six million pounds of phosphorus to the Bay – annually!
- By 2017, seven years into the TMDL commitment, Pennsylvania's efforts have resulted in the annual reduction of over 15 million pounds of nitrogen and nearly 2.3 million pounds of phosphorus.

Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP is the product of successful collaboration and engagement between government agencies, state legislators, county and local government officials, industry associations, NGOs, and citizens. This comprehensive effort has also resulted in Countywide Action Plans (CAPs) for clean water that are realistic and implementable to local communities.

As part of the Phase 3 WIP planning process, Pennsylvania has broken out its Bay watershed counties into four tiers: the eight Pilot and Tier 2 counties collectively account for 54% of Pennsylvania's nitrogen and 42% of Pennsylvania's phosphorus loads. The remaining 26 Tier 3 and Tier 4 counties collectively account for the remaining 46% of Pennsylvania's nitrogen and 58% of Pennsylvania's phosphorus goals.

As Pennsylvania rolled out its WIP in 2018, four Pilot counties were invited to participate in a voluntary pilot project to develop local CAPs. Lancaster and York counties began in spring 2018, and Adams and Franklin counties began in fall 2018. The four Tier 2 counties developed their CAPs throughout calendar year 2020, and 26 Tier 3 and 4

counties finalized their CAPs 2021. All counties agreed to participate in this voluntary effort and are now working with local and state partners to implement their CAPs.

Much progress is occurring at the local, state, and federal levels around Pennsylvania's Phase 3 WIP. Please subscribe to Pennsylvania's [Healthy Waters e-newsletter](#) to stay up to date on coordination efforts, action steps and resources Pennsylvania is counting on to achieve its pollution reduction goals by 2025.