

**REPORT OF THE SECRETARY OF NATURAL AND HISTORIC  
RESOURCES**

**REPORT ON EXPENDITURES FROM THE CHESAPEAKE BAY  
RESTORATION FUND**

**TO THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, CHESAPEAKE AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES, THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES, THE  
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS, THE SENATE  
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, AND THE VIRGINIA DELEGATION TO  
THE CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION**



**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
RICHMOND  
DECEMBER 2025**

Pursuant to § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(a), the purpose of voluntary contributions of tax refunds to the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund (Fund) is to fulfill “the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan submitted by the Commonwealth of Virginia to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on November 29, 2010, and any subsequent revisions thereof.”

This report fulfills the requirements of § 58.1-344.3.C(2)(c) that “the Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources shall submit a report to the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources; the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources; the House Committee on Appropriations; the Senate Committee on Finance; and the Virginia delegation to the Chesapeake Bay Commission, describing the grants awarded from moneys deposited in the fund. The report shall include a list of grant recipients, a description of the purpose of each grant, the amount received by each grant recipient, and an assessment of activities or initiatives supported by each grant.”

The balance of the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund as of December 19, 2025 is \$312,856.48.

On August 23, 2019, Virginia issued the final Chesapeake Bay TMDL Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) that revises prior restoration plans for reducing nutrient and sediment pollution based upon updated science, enhanced modeling tools, higher resolution land use/cover data, as well as local area water quality goals. The Phase III WIP succeeds the Phase I and Phase II WIPs, prepared in 2010 and 2012 respectively, and serves as the guide for implementation efforts moving forward.

Chesapeake Bay Restoration Funds will be used to implement the following key strategies in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its living resources:

**Improvement of Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program Implementation - \$38,000**

To achieve the Commonwealth’s nutrient reduction targets, Virginia’s Phase III WIP seeks 85% implementation of nutrient management plans on all cropland acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, as well as the exclusion of livestock from all perennial streams in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. These two best management practices (BMPs) have also been recognized as top priorities by § 62.1-44.119:1 of the Code of Virginia. In addition, WIP III directs the Commonwealth to “make revisions to the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share Program, including but not limited to, regionalizing the program”. This project will increase implementation of nutrient management plans, livestock stream exclusion, and other best management practices by utilizing a facilitator to more efficiently and effectively manage the AgBMP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). This also aligns with the work of the Chapters 735 and 736 Stakeholders Advisory Group, which has been tasked with reviewing annual progress and making recommendations towards the implementation of the Commonwealth’s agricultural commitments in WIP III.

According to the *2024 Progress Report of the Chapters 735 and 736 Stakeholders Advisory Group*, “The Board relies on the advice and experience of an AgBMP Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for guidance on ways to improve the Program. The TAC is comprised of representatives from state and federal agencies, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, agriculture industry organizations, environmental organizations, and other partners. Over the last

several years, hundreds of suggestions have been reviewed and discussed by the TAC. Many of these suggestions are incorporated into the Program, after receiving approval from the Board. The work of the TAC has led to improved flexibility in the Program and increased options for producers. The Board and the Department will continue to examine ways to more effectively utilize the expertise of the TAC members, recognizing the time commitment members make to serve on the TAC”.

The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation contracted with Virginia Commonwealth University to utilize an experienced and neutral facilitator to lead the TAC meetings (both full and subcommittee) to provide greater assurance of unbiased meeting management, ensure all stakeholder voices are heard, keep discussions focused and productive, and achieve clear outcomes. Given that VACS is the linchpin to the agriculture sector’s nutrient reduction strategies, this type of outside assistance is crucial to ensuring the program remains innovative and is thoroughly exploring all options to encourage producers to implement best management practices.

**Building Virginia’s Voluntary Wetlands Restoration Workforce - \$20,000**

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) is leveraging an existing program in support of its efforts to enhance capacity in voluntary wetland restoration and enhancement, particularly in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Virginia Sea Grant Program coordinates a 12-month fellowship program intended to provide educational and professional development opportunities for post-graduates interested in Virginia’s coastal and marine resources. Fellows receive on-the-job training by working with a Virginia host agency to address pressing coastal and marine resource issues, while learning about the policy and management process occurring at the state level.

This work directly supports WIP III, specifically Initiative 4 (“pursue the restoration and enhancement of wetland habitats”). More specifically, based on the targeted tasks assigned, this fellow will contribute directly to several key milestones in this Initiative, including #8 (provide technical assistance to public and private landowners; develop training to improve evaluation of lands for potential restoration or enhancement), #9 (develop a strategy to facilitate reporting about wetlands protection, enhancement and restoration), #11 (leverage DWR’s Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Stamp Fund grant program to fund wetlands projects with non-governmental partners), and #12 (provide 1,500 hours of coordination to state, regional and national wetlands and associated species conservation planning efforts which impact wetlands via acquisition, enhancement or restoration).

In addition, the amended 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement contains a new “Workforce Development Outcome” designed to “increase the ability of all job seekers in the watershed to understand, participate in and succeed in career pathways that positively support the Chesapeake Bay watershed”. Associated targets with the outcome include:

- By 2040, inform and grow implementation of strategies that help students, educators and job seekers to become aware of and understand environmental careers and the in-demand skills and pathways to access these opportunities.

- By 2040, increase the number of post-secondary institutions and training providers offering industry recognized credentials that support Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Goals and Outcomes.

- By 2040, engage employers to support greater hiring and retention of workers trained in fields necessary to support Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement Goals and Outcomes.

Supporting the Virginia Sea Grant Fellowship Program through this project will allow Virginia to contribute to achieving both the Workforce Development Outcome and the Wetlands Outcome.

---

For further information contact:

Stefanie Taillon, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources

[stefanie.taillon@governor.virginia.gov](mailto:stefanie.taillon@governor.virginia.gov)