VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL

Mr. Cosmo Servidio                    Mr. Dana Aunkst
Regional Administrator                Director
Environmental Protection Agency, Region 3    EPA, Chesapeake Bay Program
1650 Arch Street                      410 Severn Avenue, Suite 112
Philadelphia, PA 19103-2029           Annapolis, MD 21403

Re: Virginia’s Draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan for Meeting the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load

Dear Administrator Servidio and Director Aunkst:

On behalf of Governor Ralph S. Northam, I submit the Commonwealth’s Draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) for meeting the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). Concurrently, the Virginia Office of Natural Resources, through the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), releases the Draft Phase III WIP for public review and comment.

Development of the Commonwealth’s Draft Phase III WIP has been guided by Governor Northam’s goals for his Administration:

- To achieve the state basin planning targets while accounting for future population and economic growth and the impacts of climate change and to do so no later than December 31, 2025;
- To engage and seek guidance from partners, including local governments, planning district or regional commissions (PDCs), and soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs) through a local area planning effort;
- To develop a plan that is resilient, practical, cost-effective, and provides for multiple benefits; and
- To adhere to expectations established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and our Chesapeake Bay Program Partners, particularly those regarding reasonable assurance.

Achieving the Commonwealth’s 2017 reduction targets for nitrogen and phosphorus through successful implementation of the Phase I and Phase II WIPs demonstrates clearly that...
the goal of fully achieving Virginia’s state basin planning targets is within our reach. Yet, 
restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its tidal tributaries will require significant additional action by 
federal, state and local governments, wastewater utilities, farmers and the agriculture and 
forestry industries, landowners and homeowners, lawn care companies, the general public and 
many others.

The building blocks of our Draft Phase III WIP include our existing federal, state and 
local programs, detailed local area plans provided by our PDCs and SWCDs, as well as new state 
initiatives. Governor Northam and I remain grateful for the thoughtful recommendations 
received from multiple local stakeholders through the PDCs and SWCDs local area planning 
effort throughout 2018, and we have incorporated many of these recommendations into the Draft 
Phase III WIP.

The Commonwealth will benefit from cleaner water and a restored Chesapeake Bay. 
Failing to meet our obligations under the Clean Water Act and to our Chesapeake Bay Program 
Partners is not acceptable. As our current progress reflects, reducing nutrient and sediment 
pollution enhances our economy and our quality of life. This Draft Phase III WIP will result in a 
healthier, more diverse economy, including but not limited to recreation, tourism, and water-
based industries, increased property values, more sustainable land uses, and a Chesapeake Bay 
that future generations of Virginians will have the opportunity to enjoy.

While the Draft Phase III WIP outlines multiple state actions, Virginia will continue to 
rely upon a strong federal partnership to implement those actions. As noted by the Chesapeake 
Bay Commission in 2017 “the state-federal Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership has 
successfully advanced a collaborative, state-led, federally supported restoration approach.”

Unfortunately, the President’s proposed budget does not include funding adequate to 
meet this commitment. The Chesapeake Bay will not be restored if funding for EPA’s 
Chesapeake Bay Program is reduced by 90 percent. To sustain strong collaboration, the federal 
government must remain a full partner by not only maintaining but also increasing financial 
support to the states and the District of Columbia.

We now invite EPA’s review and recommendations along with those of all stakeholders 
and the general public. Through your collective input, we anticipate building an even stronger, 
final Phase III WIP.

Sincerely,

Matthew J. Strickler
Attachment: Virginia’s Draft Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan for Meeting the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load

cc: Members of the Chesapeake Bay Stakeholders Advisory Group
The Honorable David Bulova, Chair, Chesapeake Bay Commission Virginia Delegation
The Honorable Danny Marshall, III, Chair, Virginia House of Delegates Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Richard H. Stuart, Chair, Virginia Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Kenneth R. Plum, Virginia House of Delegates Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources Committee
The Honorable Chap Petersen, Virginia Senate Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources Committee
Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, President
Chesapeake Bay Watershed, Planning District/Regional Commissions, Executive Directors
Virginia Chesapeake Bay Interagency Team