



Chesapeake Bay Program
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
645 Contees Wharf Road, P.O. Box 28, Edgewater, MD 21037
Phone: (410)798-1283 Fax: (410)798-0816
<http://www.chesapeake.org/stac/>

July 30, 2018

RE: STAC Workshop Report: Integrating Recent Findings to Explain Water Quality Change: Support for the Mid-Point Assessment and Beyond

James Edward, Interim Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program Management Board
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 109
Annapolis, MD 21403

Cc: Management Board; Scientific Technical Assessment and Reporting (STAR); Water Quality Goal Implementation Team

Dear Acting Director Edward,

Please see the attached STAC report entitled, “*Integrating Recent Findings to Explain Water-Quality Change: Support for the Mid-Point Assessment and Beyond*”. This report contains specific recommendations identified by participants at STAC’s December 12-13, 2017 workshop with a summary of workshop proceedings.

This letter summarizes key recommendations of a workshop that included scientists and water-quality managers in order to identify elements of recent research findings that could inform the development of the Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) and future adaptive management in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The workshop was the culmination of two years of work by researchers in estuarine and watershed systems to synthesize key management-relevant insights, including monitoring and analysis of the watershed, watershed sediment transport, estuarine water clarity, submerged aquatic vegetation (SAV) abundance, and a review of the history of major tributary nutrient and sediment loads and conceptual models of estuarine response. The workshop functioned to 1) bring together these research synthesis groups to share their findings and identify complementary and contradictory insights across disciplinary and geographical boundaries; and 2) to foster a dialogue between these scientists and a group of managers representing each jurisdiction of the Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP).

The recommendations cover 3 themes: 1) scientific messages that merit further communication; 2) potential implications for management; and 3) research recommendations for the future. Some key recommended next steps include:

- Throughout 2018, provide in-person **technical expertise** to assist local WIP planners in applying scientific insights and existing CBP decision-support tools to WIP development. Incorporate insights from this workshop report on implications for management into

technical assistance and WIP development tools. Consider leveraging the expertise of the CBP's Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC), Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC), local extension agents, and watershed groups, and provide additional support to counties that have fewer resources for planning.

- Provide resources to **build science communication** priorities identified in this report into effective products, and disseminate to CBP partners at all levels.
- Establish a mechanism for managers and scientists to **coordinate BMP implementation and research efforts**, so that researchers can establish pre- and post-implementation monitoring and analysis of system response. Prioritize "hot spot" areas for these efforts.
- Conduct additional science integration workshops to generate place- or system-based products, prioritizing high-yielding areas. Encourage integration of insights from both the watershed and the estuary.

We hope that the Management Board, Goal Implementation Teams, and various workgroups will find these recommendations useful, and we look forward to your feedback. STAC respectfully requests a written response to the workshop findings and recommendations from the CBP Management Board Chair by October 30, 2018.

Please direct any questions regarding this report and its recommendations to Rachel Dixon, Coordinator of the CBP's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee.

On behalf of the entire STAC, thank you for considering these recommended next steps, and we look forward to continuing this dialogue in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Brian Benham", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Brian Benham
Chair, Chesapeake Bay Program's Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee