



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
410 Severn Avenue, Suite 107A
Annapolis, MD 21403

November 2, 2010

Denise Wardrop, Chair
Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee
645 Contees Wharf Road, P.O. Box 28
Edgewater, MD 21037

Dear Denise and STAC members:

This letter responds to your correspondence of October 22, which outlines a number of concerns with the current relationship between the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office (NCBO) and Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC). Your letter identifies two primary issues, including lack of NCBO requests for scientific and technical review and concern that NCBO's FY 2011 budget request is supporting internal capacity versus external research and monitoring.

As you know, I briefed the Board of the Chesapeake Research Consortium (CRC) on September 9 in response to a letter similar to the one you sent. I made clear that NCBO is committed to engaging the broader scientific community on a number of fronts and we discussed ways to improve coordination and collaboration between the NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office and scientific/academic institutions. I followed that meeting with an e-mail on September 13, where I offered the following steps and asked for CRC Board response and/or additional ideas:

1. **Ad Hoc Advisory group** – I offered to reconvene the ad hoc advisory group NCBO convened in December 2008 to garner feedback on our NCBO Strategic Plan.
2. **Chesapeake Bay EO Action Plan** – I shared the slides that were presented to the CRC Board, capturing the significant actions NOAA is proposing for FY 2011 and requested any feedback on those actions by September 17. (I provided these slides to Kevin Sellner)
3. **FY11 Budget** - I shared preliminary spend plans for FY 2011 in light of the President's proposed increase. I requested feedback on those proposals and comment on any additional strategic investments folks might recommend, keeping in mind the focus on implementing the EO and the actions outlined.



4. **One-on-ones** – In order to garner a clearer sense of the vision and strategic direction for CRC Board member organizations, I offered to meet one-on-one. I have since met with John Wells (VIMS) and Dick Zimmerman (ODU) and am meeting with Don Boesch (UMCES) this week.
5. **STAC "straw man"** - It was suggested that I visit with STAC and relay a general vision for what NCBO is planning for the next fiscal year and beyond, outlining key opportunities to leverage and utilize the capacity of STAC on priority science and technical needs for the Bay.

In advance of the CRC Board meeting, Aileen Smith (of my staff) corresponded with Liz Van Dolah prior to your September STAC meeting and indicated that “NOAA would be very interested in a presentation to/dialogue with STAC regarding proposed NOAA focal areas for the Chesapeake Executive Order (13508) FY 11 Action Plan.” Liz responded that your September meeting agenda was “very packed” and suggested “(December 14-15) where we are hoping to dedicate 2 hours to meeting with all the Executive Order leads to discuss the action plans.” By way of this letter, I reiterate my offer to brief STAC on NCBO’s strategic goals and objectives as well as our preliminary budget plans for FY 2011. In addition, there are several emerging scientific and technical issues that the Sustainable Fisheries Goal Implementation Team has raised and for which STAC advice has been sought (via my staff contacting David Secor, one of your members with particular expertise in fisheries issues). I look forward to following up with STAC on these questions as well.

NCBO agrees that collaboration on all protection and restoration activities is key to achieving success. I look forward to the chance to discuss how STAC and NCBO can further engage on reinvigorating a productive relationship that ensures Chesapeake Bay protection and restoration needs are being met effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Peyton Robertson".

Peyton Robertson
Director, NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office