



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
www.chesapeake.org/stac

Peyton Robertson
NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office
410 Severn Ave.
Annapolis, MD 21403

October 22, 2010

Dear Peyton,

The Chesapeake Bay Program's success in achieving restoration goals depends on the advice it receives from the broader scientific community. The CBP Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) is the designated independent scientific review committee for the CBP partner agencies. It is a long-standing organization made up of 35 independent scientists and engineers, who donate their time to promote the use of best available science in policy, management, and implementation of restoration goals. Through its members, STAC draws on regional-national scientific expertise to insure broad community input and non-conflicted opinion scientific and technical issues important to the ongoing and planned restoration.

Through this letter, the STAC membership wishes to express their concern regarding the lack of interaction between STAC and the NOAA CBP. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office has not requested significant review from STAC for some time. We believe it is our mandate to work with NCBO to provide technical and scientific guidance. The success of the Bay restoration effort and the credibility of the program are critically dependent upon the use of the best available science and technical knowledge; appropriate scientific and technical support of all NCBO activities should be a primary objective.

At this time, STAC is most concerned with NCBO's FY 2011 budget proposal. At STAC's June quarterly meeting (June 9-10, 2010) the membership was made aware of the announced plans for the FY2011 budget planning. NOAA's NMFS has requested an increase of \$5M for a total of \$7.1M for the NCBO to support the Chesapeake Bay Protection and Restoration Executive Order 13508 (EO). The brochure circulated by NCBO staff indicates that a majority of these additional funds would be internalized within NCBO rather than used to restore funding of research and monitoring programs identified by STAC and others as essential for advancing the basin's restoration efforts. While we are cognizant that the specifics of the funding request are preliminary at this time, we are troubled by the pattern of using available funds to build capacity within NCBO that is either generally duplicative of existing capabilities in the Bay region among other Bay Program partners or best served by other partners. This pattern has

been established and strengthened in previous years, and is counter-productive to the efficient deployment of scarce resources in addressing the considerable challenge of Bay restoration.

Over the past few years, STAC has worked to engage NCBO in strategic discussions and collaborative efforts to improve the benefits of available NOAA funding – and STAC has been reassured of NCBO’s intent and commitment to do this. We call on NCBO to honor that commitment by requesting and considering scientific and technical advice from STAC. We believe it is critical to include review of NCBO’s strategic planning processes.

The effective integration of expertise from the Bay Program, federal agencies, STAC, and the larger academic community will pose a significant challenge. The current environment of adaptive management, accountability, and scale of the restoration goal under limited resources should instigate a reflection on all of the relationships between program partners, and the relationship of STAC to various components of the CBP is no exception. What is clearly required of all of us is increased transparency, articulation of both long term and short term goals, and clear communication among us to allow integration and non-duplication of efforts.

To better provide independent scientific review to the NCBO, STAC proposes the following actions:

1. Annual STAC review of NCBO’s goals, objectives, and budgetary requests. Following a NCBO presentation and discussion with STAC, STAC would provide a formal written review within a month, and NCBO would come back with a written response. Ideally, we would hope that STAC and NCBO would review the strategic plans at least two years in advance of the budgetary request.
2. A more frequent science advisory role for STAC in the NCBO science and research planning process, including STAC review of key products and tools being considered and/or implemented by NCBO in a 1-3 year window. This review would include documented request, review and response from NCBO and STAC.

We thank you for your willingness to examine our relationship to increase our collective effectiveness; we are faced with significant challenges at a critical time, and it will take all of us to get there. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Denice Wardrop
STAC Chair