



The Severn Riverkeeper Program

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CHESAPEAKE BAY EXECUTIVE ORDER RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation Number 1:

That the Environmental Protection Agency adopt a policy and procedure for withholding federal funds from states that do not require their local jurisdictions to enforce environmental laws and regulations.

The fate of many waterways is decided at the local level. Building permits that include or do not include best management practices are issued. Laws and regulations that prohibit pollution are enforced or not enforced.

For example, the Capital River of the State of Maryland, the Severn River, continues to deteriorate at an alarming rate because the local permitting and regulatory authority, Anne Arundel County, refuses to require best management practices for building permits and fails to enforce pollution laws.

The only way for the Environmental Protection Agency to affect change at the local level is with financial incentives and disincentives. Just as the U.S. Department of Transportation insures compliance with federal policy by threatening to withhold federal highway funds, EPA could do the same with regard to environmental laws and regulations.

Local jurisdictions, such as Anne Arundel County, depend on state funding for many of their programs. EPA could threaten to withhold federal funding from those states that do not require environmental compliance at the local level. States threatened with the loss of federal funding could then threaten local authorities with the loss of state funding.

Local authorities, such as Anne Arundel County, would quickly comply or lose critical state funding. This is the only way federal policy to protect and restore our waterways will be implemented at the all-important local level.



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Recommendation Number 2:

That the Environmental Protection Agency adopt a policy that a certain percentage of federal environmental funding go to shovel-ready restoration projects that are designed to improve water quality.

The Chesapeake Bay Program, established under the “Chesapeake 2000 Agreement”, includes the federal government as a signatory. Carol Browner, Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, signed for the United States of America.

On May 12, 2009, President Obama issued an Executive Order declaring the Chesapeake Bay a national treasure and calling for a new era of federal leadership in protecting and restoring the Bay.

The federal government has provided significant funding for the Bay Program since the signing of the Bay Agreement. However, the goals of improving water quality have not been met. Review of the Bay Program by the Government Accountability Office noted a disproportionate amount of money for studies and modeling and not for in-the-ground restoration projects. Studies and modeling do not improve water quality.

EPA can quickly remedy this failure by requiring that a certain percentage of federal funding go to in-the-ground, shovel-ready, restoration projects.

In August of 2001, EPA held a press conference and announced that the only way to “save the Bay” was to shift from the regional to the local approach of saving the Bay river by river. In response, many local community-based watershed organizations were established, and they developed watershed management plans. These plans included restoration projects that will directly improve water quality.

These restoration projects and the improved water quality that will come with them are simply awaiting federal funding that is being wasted on redundant studies and modeling.

