



## **Feds get last-minute pressure on Bay plan**

With the Obama administration set to unveil on Wednesday its strategy for restoring the Chesapeake Bay, the feds are getting a lot of last-minute "advice" (aka pressure) from environmentalists on what the plan should say.

A coalition of 40 activist groups making up the [Choose Clean Water](#) coalition released Monday a letter they'd sent to Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lisa P. Jackson spelling out four things they believe the federal strategy must contain to succeed. They want EPA to set a high bar for cleanup plans to be submitted by Maryland and other bay states, and "tough consequences" if the states fall short, either with their plans or their follow-through. The same goes for the two-year "milestones" the states have voluntarily pledged to set.

The groups also want EPA to plug the gaps in existing clean-water regulations, with rules that would apply to farm and storm-water runoff not now covered. Lastly, the coalition says federal agencies need to get more involved in conserving "treasured landscapes" such as Civil War battlefields, mature forests and farmland.

Meanwhile, the Center for Progressive Reform, a Washington think tank, had even more recommendations - eight in all, many of them focused on consequences, enforcement and accountability. If states fall short, it argued, the EPA should be prepared to block the issuance of discharge permits for new or expanded sources of pollution. And as a last resort, it says, the feds should spell out how and when they'll take over from states their delegated authority to enforce the Clean Water Act.

We'll know soon enough if the feds were listening. On Wednesday - one year after President Obama issued an executive order directing federal agencies to take the lead in the lagging bay cleanup - EPA's Jackson and other top administration officials are scheduled to outline the strategy at a press conference in Washington. The setting for their presser is Kingman Island, a park in the Anacostia River - one of the bay's most degraded tributaries, flowing through the nation's capital.