



PR Newswire

Ahead of EPA Release of Chesapeake Bay Restoration Strategy, Leading National, Regional Groups Map Out Needed Minimum Steps

Letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson from 40 Groups Anticipates Content of EPA Plan Due Wednesday; Emphasis Placed on Meeting December Deadline for Bay Pollution Load Rule.

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WASHINGTON, May 10 /PRNewswire-USNewswire/ -- Just two days before the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is due to outline its "Strategy for Protecting and Restoring the Chesapeake Bay" on May 12, 2010, a broad coalition of 40 national and regional groups is urging the federal agency "to exercise leadership and authority to the fullest so that genuine progress is made in restoring the hundreds of rivers and streams that flow into the Chesapeake Bay as well as the Bay itself."

Submitted by the Choose Clean Water Coalition (CCWC), the letter to EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson is signed by such national groups as American Rivers, Environment America, Izaak Walton League, National Parks Conservation Association, and the National Wildlife Federation. Additionally, the letter to Jackson is signed by leading regional groups including Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Environment Virginia, Maryland League of Conservation Voters, Pennsylvania Farmers Union and the Western Clinton Sportsmen Association.

The joint CCWC letter points out: "Much of this work depends on the timely development of the Bay-wide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL). We fully expect EPA and its partners to honor its commitment to complete the TMDL by the December 2010 deadline. The Chesapeake Bay is an invaluable natural resource whose restoration has the potential to serve as a national model."

The letter from members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition focuses on:

-- Watershed Implementation Plans. "In order to create meaningful plans to show how pollution limits will be met, EPA must clearly articulate expectations of the new Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) and honor its commitment to undertake careful, detailed reviews of jurisdictions' submissions when they are received. The WIPs are a crucial component of the new accountability framework because they demonstrate how jurisdictions, the six Chesapeake Bay states and the District of Columbia, will achieve

the Bay-wide Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) by reducing pollutants from all sources and sectors. EPA must also honor its commitment to imposing consequences for inadequate WIPs - and for future failure to adequately implement them."

-- Achievement of Two-Year Milestones. "EPA must assess the two-year milestones being developed by Bay jurisdictions to determine if they demonstrate real progress in reducing nutrient pollution, namely by achieving the interim goal of having controls in place by 2017 to achieve 60% of pollution reductions, and the final goal of having 100% of the controls in place by 2025. EPA must also communicate clearly to Bay jurisdictions that it expects them to achieve two-year milestones, consistent with pollution limits of the Bay-wide TMDL, and that it will invoke consequences for non-achievement."

-- Regulatory Gaps and Weaknesses. "EPA must promulgate new regulations to close gaps in the existing regulatory scheme, such as the numerous concentrated animal feeding operations (CAFOs) that fall outside the permit requirements, or the high levels of pollution from sites that are not covered by stormwater permits. However, the promulgation of new regulations must be undertaken concurrently with the exercise of existing authorities and not be an excuse for delay. There are considerable water quality gains to be realized from committed enforcement of current state and federal laws. Working with states to achieve reductions from significant pollution sources using existing enforcement authorities must remain an urgent priority."

-- Conserving Treasured Landscapes. "Establishing a strong program to preserve Treasured Landscapes is critical to both the ecological health of the Chesapeake Bay region and to the ability of citizens to enjoy many of these unique areas. There have been many threats to unique Civil War battlefield sites, to mature forests and to the region's rich agrarian history. Many of these threats will have severe environmental impacts and close off more natural areas available for public enjoyment. The federal agency partners should ensure that there is a concerted effort to preserve these unique Treasured Landscapes and to ensure that public access to these areas is preserved and enhanced. As part of the program, we would like to see the establishment of near term goals for identifying specific landscapes for protection."

You can read the full text of the CCWC letter online at <http://www.choosecleanwater.org/cms/documents/JacksonLetterMay2010.pdf>.

ABOUT CHOOSE CLEAN WATER COALITION

The Choose Clean Water coalition brings together people and more than 125 organizations from Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia, working together to help everyone in the region choose clean water.

SOURCE Choose Clean Water Coalition, Washington, D.C.