

Engagement Guide for West Virginia's Phase III Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP)

Background: Watershed wide, the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort has celebrated significant successes, yet much work remains to reduce pollution from entering the Bay. The Phase III Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) will need to continue and accelerate progress if we are to achieve the 2025 clean-up goals.

West Virginia is on track. We are the only state that has achieved “ongoing oversight” status across all sectors: Agriculture, Suburban/Urban, Wastewater, and Nutrient Trading. Most West Virginia tributaries are seeing reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution..

As a result of hard work by many sectors, including farming and wastewater treatment, we met our sediment and phosphorous goals. With the help of several cost-share programs, many West Virginia farmers are managing their land to reduce runoff by planting cover crops to better hold soil on the farm and by planting forests to buffer streams. Major upgrades to wastewater treatment plants are online. In many cases, the water coming out of our treatment plants is cleaner than the water in the river. We've also seen exciting model projects in managing stormwater.

What do we *need*?

- **Agriculture sector solutions** for nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution. Encourage farmers to take advantage of cost-share programs.
- **Wastewater treatment plant upgrades** that facilitates funding to reduce pollution from aging wastewater treatment facilities.
- **Septic systems** that continue to receive funding and promote remediation of these failing systems.
- **Accounting for growth** in two of the three fastest growing counties in the state (Jefferson and Berkeley), and providing opportunity to incorporate BMPs in local parks and existing facilities that ensure streams and drinking water are protected.
- **Federal public lands** to receive more active engagement in forest management plans that protect downstream drinking water supplies.
- **Stormwater management** projects that continue progressing while meeting the needs of local jurisdictions.
- **Watershed improvements** such as rain gardens, planting trees, rain barrels, engaging homeowners, educating school children on the issues and installing pet waste stations.

What is our *request*?

If we are to achieve the necessary pollution reductions critical to saving the Bay, West Virginia must also ensure that:

- **Climate change/ Coastal Resilience:** Address climate change qualitatively and quantitatively.
- **Accounting for growth:** Include policies that account for on and offset pollution across all sectors and BMP implementations.
- **Land conservation** BMPs will be an option for jurisdictions to consider and commit to in developing their WIPs.
- **State and local funding** is dedicated to implement BMPs for farmers and conservation practices.
- **State BMP Verification Programs** to verify BMPs are installed, implemented and routinely maintained.
- The **Farm Bill** has supported funding mechanisms such as the RCPP and CREP within the bill that will bring, continued and imperative funding back to the region.
- A stronger WIP be created for **Conowingo Dam** that provides ample funding.
- **Clean Water Act Permits** are renewed on time, to allow state's voices to be heard during the permit developmental process.

