



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION
CHESAPEAKE CONSERVANCY



In Pennsylvania

Legislators consider enhancement of stewardship on conserved lands

A comprehensive study of land conservation in the Chesapeake watershed done by the Chesapeake Bay Commission and the Chesapeake Conservancy has recommended that land conservation efforts focus on conserving forest and farm lands, because these lands contribute to the region's economic base and provide the greatest opportunities for reducing water pollution.

Pennsylvania's delegates on the commission have picked up on the report's findings and plan to look for opportunities for legislation that would enhance the application of pollution-reducing best management practices on preserved land. The effort would both conserve land and support the state's Watershed Implementation Plan designed to meet the federal Environmental Protection Agency's requirement to meet a new pollution diet for the bay.

The Delegation is considering amendments to Pennsylvania's Agricultural Security Area law to increase the minimum level of land stewardship and conservation practices necessary for land to be eligible for the Commonwealth's agricultural conservation easement purchase program. Similarly, the law could also be amended to increase the weight given to conservation practice implementation when parcels are ranked for an easement purchase under the program. In addition to targeting preservation dollars to land with the highest levels of conservation, the changes may also incentivize implementation of new best management practices by those considering an easement sale.

Pennsylvania's members on the Chesapeake Bay Commission in 2010 are Senator Michael W. Brubaker, the commission's vice-chair, and Senator Mike Waugh; Representatives Russ Fairchild, James Wansacz, and Mike Sturla; John Hanger, Secretary, Department of Environmental Protection; and George B. Wolff, citizen representative.

The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a tri-state legislative commission (Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania) that works on a broad array of environmental policies including promoting land conservation and land management practices to benefit water quality.

Chesapeake Conservancy is a non-profit organization whose mission is to ensure conservation, stewardship, access and enjoyment of the Chesapeake's iconic landscapes, great rivers and cultural and historic assets. The principal focus of the Conservancy is the implementation of: the John Smith Chesapeake

National Historic Trail; the Chesapeake Gateways and Watertrails Network; and a Chesapeake Treasured Landscape Initiative.

Contact: Marel Raub
717-772-3651 (O)
717-439-9040 (C)