



Bay Leaders Unite Against Plan to De-Fund Bay Program September 2017

In May, the Trump Administration released its full FY18 Budget Proposal. The Proposal aligns closely with the preliminary FY18 Budget outline released in March, and calls for significant cuts to a large number of discretionary non-defense agencies and programs. The largest proposed cuts on a percentage basis are to EPA, which would see a 31% cut in funding and 20% cut in staffing. This would result in an overall budget of \$5.65 billion, down from \$8.05 billion in FY17. Of significance to VAMWA Members, the budget proposal also maintains the earlier outline's proposal to eliminate **all** funding for the Chesapeake Bay geographic program (currently \$73 million annually).

In response, Bay state leaders are rallying together against President Trump's efforts to de-fund Bay cleanup. At their annual meeting in June, members of the Chesapeake Executive Council voted unanimously (EPA abstaining) on a [Resolution in Support of the Chesapeake Bay Program Partnership](#) urging Congress to keep funding the Chesapeake Bay Program. The EC is comprised of the Governors of the Bay states (Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, New York, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia), the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the EPA Administrator, and the Chair of the Chesapeake Bay Commission. In addition to funding, the resolution calls on the President and Congress to continue the current level of federal support for the Bay Program and participating partners for the restoration of the Bay. It further resolves that science, monitoring, modeling and restoration continue to be undertaken with the full participation of local state and federal agencies, and private sector entities, as appropriate. Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan was elected by the council to succeed Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, and pledged to be a "fierce advocate for greater environmental progress and deeper collaboration upstream and throughout the Bay watershed."

Senior Virginia Delegate and Vice Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Commission Scott Lingamfelter weighed in at the E.C. Meeting as well. "We are beginning to see the fruits of our labor, but we know that our next steps to better manage agriculture and stormwater runoff, in particular, will likely be our toughest," he said. "Now is not the time to allow ourselves to be distracted or defunded," Lingamfelter added. "We all need to remain true to this endeavor together... If we do this right, if we can restore this great resource, it will be the most important restoration project in the world. If we do it right, other estuaries that are in trouble in this world will see the benefit of our wise strategies."

Congress is currently working on its own budget for FY 2018.