

Good Afternoon. I am Christopher Thompson, the District Manager of the Lancaster County Conservation District. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to express the thoughts of the Lancaster County Conservation District Board of Directors and the PA Association of Conservation Districts regarding what has been called the PA Chesapeake Bay Reboot Strategy.

As many of you know, there are 66 conservation districts across Pennsylvania and each is led by a local board of directors who are familiar with their county's natural resource concerns. For more than 65 years, our shared mission has been providing conservation education, technical services and financial assistance to the citizens of our counties so they can be good stewards of their environment. We strive for voluntary compliance and accomplish this mission through various programs and by coordinating help from public and private sector partnerships. When that mission intersects with the State's goals and objectives for the land, water and other natural resources we are the local "boots on the ground" that helps to get the work done.

One such goal and objective is the reduction of nutrients entering Pennsylvania's tributaries leading to the Chesapeake Bay. The state agencies tasked with the responsibility for achieving this goal are the Department of Environmental Protection, the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. For the last 30 years we have partnered in the effort to clean up the Bay because it aligned with our goals of assisting local land owners to be better stewards of their natural resources.

Fundamentally, Conservation Districts support the objectives of the Comprehensive Strategy to Improve Water Quality in the state. Whether you are in the Bay region or not, clean water and viable farms is paramount to our mission. The six elements listed in the January 21, 2016 joint press release are in line with our understanding about what it will take to accomplish the stated objective of "clean water and viable farms". However, we object to the lack of communication and collaboration by the agencies through the development process of the new program that so profoundly changes what we do and yet is so dependent on our participation.

Recently, DEP and PDA have extended offers to meet with Districts and PACD, our state association, to discuss accomplishing shared objectives, but with an eye to 2025 and achieving the 2010 mandated Clean Water Act goals and objectives we need to reinforce the principle that we work better for Pennsylvania when we work together.

Respectfully, Chris Thompson

