



EPA Evaluation of Federal Agencies' 2014-2015 Milestone Progress and 2016-2017 Milestone Commitments to Reduce Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Sediment

Overview

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is providing an assessment of the progress made by federal agencies toward meeting 2014-2015 water quality milestones set forth under the [Chesapeake Bay Executive Order 13508 \(EO\) Strategy](#), as well as activities to help jurisdictions meet their milestones and Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) commitments. This assessment also provides an overview of 2016-2017 federal milestone commitments and ideas for future improvements to federal agency coordination with the jurisdictions.

Federal Facilities in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed

The Clean Water Act Section 117(f), directs federal agencies that own or operate a facility within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to participate in restoration programs. Additionally, the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (Bay TMDL) and the EO Strategy direct federal agencies to participate in pollution reduction programs to achieve the goal of a restored Chesapeake Bay. In 2011, EPA issued the [Guide for Federal Lands and Facilities' Role in Chesapeake Bay Jurisdictions' Phase II Watershed Implementation Plans](#), describing expectations for coordination with jurisdictions and participation in WIP implementation and the [Guide for Chesapeake Bay Water Quality Two-year Milestones](#), describing expectations for development of water quality milestones and coordination with jurisdictions on milestones for individual federal facilities.

Progress was made during the Phase II WIP development process to engage the Bay jurisdictions and federal agencies continues; however more interaction and coordination is needed.

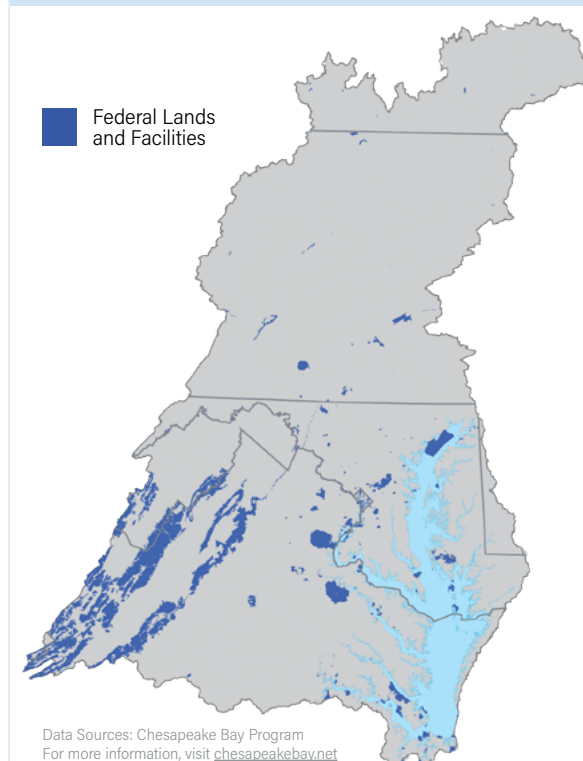
2014-2015 Water Quality Progress and WIP Support and 2016-2017 Milestone Review

The EPA review of federal agencies' 2014-2015 Water Quality Progress, support of Bay jurisdictions WIPs and 2016-2017 Milestone commitments outlines active federal agency participation in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and the advancement of shared goals and outcomes. Federal agencies remain committed to working with Chesapeake Bay jurisdictions, but recognize improvements can be made in coordination and on-the-ground implementation.

Strengths

- EPA managed the Bay TMDL accountability framework, including evaluating the Bay jurisdictions' progress on 2014-2015 milestones and plans for the 2016-2017 milestone period
- EPA and the Bay jurisdictions set nutrient and sediment pollution reduction targets for more than 700 federal facilities throughout the watershed; federal agencies submitted facility-specific milestones for FY16-17

Federal Lands and Facilities in the Chesapeake Bay watershed





Images by Chesapeake Bay Program

Strengths (continued)

- DoD completed a significant number of BMP Opportunity Assessments (e.g. 563 identified within Hampton Roads installations alone) and continues to design BMP concepts, develop construction documentation, and program for BMP retrofits and construction
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) issued a new Bay TMDL Regional General Permit (RGP) authorizing TMDL activities in waters of the U.S., including wetlands, within Maryland, the District of Columbia, and certain military installations of northern Virginia
- EPA and federal agencies owning most federal land in the watershed formed a joint jurisdiction and federal workgroup to coordinate federal actions to meet WIP commitments and Bay TMDL allocations; federal agencies' continued EO 13508 commitment to support jurisdictions' WIP implementation
- EPA coordinated first-ever CBP partnership Basinwide BMP Verification Framework effort including review of all seven Bay jurisdictions' verification program quality assurance plans
- EPA increased financial support to localities and other entities through Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction grants and Small Watershed Grants; programs received \$5 million each in 2014 \$6 million each in 2015
- USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service approved eight Regional Conservation Partnership Program project agreements; approximately \$45 million in USDA funding available to Agricultural producers over the next five years with partner contributions for projects more than \$35 million
- USDA applied 173,684 acres of new conservation practices on agricultural working lands in high priority watersheds.
- EPA developed joint work plans with jurisdictions to address Stormwater assessment recommendations; Maryland's work plan <http://epa.gov/chesapeakebaytmdl> was completed and EPA is working with Pennsylvania, Delaware and West Virginia on developing their work plans
- EPA achieved its portion of reducing air deposition loads to tidal surface waters of 350,000 pounds of nitrogen
- EPA completed outreach and technical assistance to jurisdictions on Model On-Site (septics) Programs; data-sharing agreement among states on evaluations of advanced onsite technologies signed in April 2015 (<http://executiveorder.chesapeakebay.net/post/Chesapeake-Bay-States-sign-Data-Sharing-Agreement-on-Advanced-Onsite-Wastewater-Treatment.aspx>)

Shortfalls

- EPA issued only two of four technical memoranda on nutrient trading scheduled for completion in 2015
- EPA-led development of updated Airshed Model scenarios was not completed on schedule

Issues to Address

- Federal agencies and jurisdictions need to continue to improve the process related to reporting federal BMP progress data
- Federal agencies need to improve the completeness of reported data; EPA notes instances of lapsing agency reporting activities
- Bay jurisdictions should work with the CBP partnership and federal agencies to ensure data reported by federal agencies is entered into the National Environmental Information Exchange Network so CBP simulation tools can more accurately reflect implementation at federal facilities

Federal Actions and Assistance

Federal activities have the potential to result in significant pollution reductions and directly support the jurisdictions in meeting WIP commitments and the Bay TMDL allocations. However, federal actions may also require significant resources. Federal agencies have a responsibility to ensure BMPs are planned, installed, maintained, tracked and reported, which the new BayFAST tool will help facilitate.

The CBP Federal Facilities Workgroup will provide a forum for federal agency environmental coordinators and the jurisdiction leads to communicate directly on TMDL-related expectations and find the most efficient way to manage the collection and provision of needed information.