

**NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE  
CHESAPEAKE BAY LISTENING SESSION\*  
JULY 14, 2008 - ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND**

Dick Coombe, NRCS Regional Assistant Chief, East: Good morning.

I see that it's just a wonderful crowd. And I just wanted to welcome all of you. We appreciate everyone attending.

USDA and Natural Resource Conservation Service are impressed with the level of interest in the Bay and appreciate the assistance in getting conservation on the ground. I'd like to start with a Pledge of Allegiance.

Would you please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance? I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

There's always a lot of interest in the Chesapeake Bay, and certainly at the watershed scale. We can be proud of everything that has been accomplished in the Bay to date.

It has all happened through partnerships. But more needs to happen. Natural Resources Conservation Service is a locally led organization. We respect input from people who know the land best and actually apply conservation on the land. Personally I believe agriculture is a preferred land use as is forestry to improve the Bay's health. I happen

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to be a farmer in the New York City watershed and have worked about 11 years of my life on just that issue.

We look forward to hearing your ideas about how to best maintain and improve agriculture's viability and protecting the Bay. This listening session demonstrates that we are serious about the Bay and serious about hearing from stakeholders at all levels representing all groups and organizations. Chief Lancaster and I recognize that there are so many dignitaries here today that we can't begin to name them. Many of them will be speaking. So once again we appreciate the dignitaries from the Federal, state and local level.

I would like to at this time introduce my boss, Chief Arlen Lancaster who works tirelessly for getting conservation on the ground. He has a great passion for conservation. And I appreciate him giving all of us the opportunity to have this little listening session today. Chief Lancaster.

Arlen Lancaster, Chief, NRCS: Thanks, Dick. And thanks for your leadership at NRCS and working with Bay issues. You've been

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really just a tremendous asset to the agency in working to bring people together to take advantage of our assets and do things for us. I see folks are in the back. There are some chairs in the front if you want to move forward and take seats. I'm going to be relatively brief because the purpose of this meeting is to hear from you, to get your perspective on how we move forward with this initiative and not necessarily for us to tell you what we're going to do, because quite frankly we're looking for that advice and guidance as we move forward.

None of us are new to working on conservation here. All of us have a passion for conservation. All of us apply it in different ways and have different areas of responsibility. And we recognize that overall as we look to implementing conservation in the Bay that there is a plan in place, there is an approach in place, and most importantly there is a dedication and a will for farmers, ranchers, interested parties in this watershed to find solutions, implement conservation so we can reach all of our goals.

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The reason we've invested over \$8 million per year in the watershed to address resource concerns, help increase their conservation goals and in doing so to make progress towards achieving the goals laid out in the plan. And as you've seen in some of the exhibits and displays that we had we have a tremendous partnership in trying to reach those goals. And if you have a chance to interact throughout this conference I hope you'll take a moment to look at what we've done and I believe that will give a roadmap of how much further we can go.

Despite the fact that we have invested our resources, the public's resources in addressing watershed concerns, despite the fact that we have taken our Farm Bill program's targeted resources to address the concerns of those in the watershed, Congress said, "You know what - we think you have a pretty good model, but we can do more." And so Congress, specifically in Section 2605 of the Farm Bill, provided additional financial resources to meet the goals of the watershed. Overall, the Bill provides \$188 million in additional program resources in the Chesapeake Bay. In

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fiscal year 2009, \$23 million is provided. And that dollar amount increases.

And as we receive your comments one thing that's important to recognize is that in some cases Congress was specific in how we can operate the program, in other places Congress provided discretion to the agency. And what we're looking for is to get comments certainly on everything, but recognize only those items that we have discretion for are those areas that we'll be able to make changes.

And one of the things Congress did specify is that the funds are utilized through existing Farm Bill programs. They are available until expended, which means that \$188 million, should Congress provide the entire amount, will be there each and every year. I will caution one of the things that we learned as we looked at the 2002 Farm Bill, only about 80 percent of that funding was actually approved and made its way through the entire Congressional process after the appropriators take action with regard to the Bill, for the applicable programs.

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And again they'll be applicable in different ways, shapes and forms, but one of the things that we're hoping to do is get some feedback here. What is the right mixture of programs? What did you identify as the types of practices and the types of programs that are necessary to reach your goals and to reach the producer goals in the watershed? We have our cost-share programs, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program, the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program.

We have easement programs, such as the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program and the Grasslands Reserve Program. We have our Stewardship program, our new Stewardship program, the Conservation Stewardship Program. And we have two land retirement programs, the Wetlands Reserve Program and Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program.

Through these programs we will enter into producer contracts for efforts to control erosion and reduce sediment and nutrient levels in ground and surface water. We'll look to restore, protect and enhance habitat that is ecologically significant. Congress also specified that

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special consideration and evaluation of applications in the Susquehanna, Shenandoah, Potomac and Patuxent River Basins. So as you provide your comments just keep in mind those are things that we really have no discretion over. These are the programs that will be utilized. These are some of the priority areas that Congress has dictated.

We will have some discretion over what practices we offer and which program mixture that we offer. \$23 million - as I explained to our folks - is that money loses its color essentially. It can be used in any of these programs. And the discretion of the agency is to decide which of those programs will get what amount. Maybe you say you want another CREP agreement and those dollars should go towards the assistance on the Federal side matching those CREP agreements with the states. Maybe the idea is that we need to do more in cover crops and the dollars should go towards EQIP. Maybe the idea is that we need to preserve much of our ag and forest land and the dollars should go to these long term easement protection programs.

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But that's why we're here. We're here to get that feedback from you, the people who are on the ground implementing conservation to address our watershed needs. We're very interested in hearing your comments. We're very aware of the Chesapeake Bay Plan and we believe that that will be a great guiding document for all of us as we look to prioritize our resources within the Bay.

And I do want to echo again what Dick said. We have so many dignitaries here from so many different levels of government that I think we would take up most of the morning if I were to go through and mention people by name. But I will mention just briefly that the folks at the podium who are taking notes and we have other staff who are taking notes to record all these comments.

Dick Coombe, the Regional Assistant Chief for the Eastern Region who's been our point person; Mark Rey, the [USDA] Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment is the tip of the spear of the Department. And Dick is the tip of the tip of the spear as we engage in these issues. Dana York, the Associate Chief - She is the highest ranking

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career employee at NRCS. She's very committed to this effort and she'll make sure that our efforts transcend administrations.

Boyd Rutherford, the Assistant Secretary for Administration in the Department of Agriculture. And I appreciate Boyd's presence here because it is an indication of how important USDA overall believes these programs can be. And Tom Christensen, the Deputy Chief for Programs who manages and has oversight over all of our Farm Bill programs.

Recognizing again all the high level of participation that we have here, the number of people that I'm sure are going to want to comment, but also those that could not attend I want to make very clear that the record for receiving comments will continue to be open. We will continue to seek input. I encourage you to go back and have folks submit written comments on this: their expectations, ideas and comments on how to make this program successful within the boundaries that Congress gave us.

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We'll continue to leave the record open for this hearing if folks want to associate it with this listening session, but again I encourage you to go out and as you interact with folks who did not have a chance to attend you encourage them to get their written comments in. Every comment is equally valid and equally important, whether it be written or given orally here. So with that Dick I think we're ready for the listening part, so I'm going to sit down, but I thank you again for your participation here today. I know that the way that we will be successful is by working collaboratively, by working together to find common solutions that implement conservation through our farmers and ranchers who are dedicated to improving their natural resources. So thank you again. (APPLAUSE)

Dick Coombe: Thank you so much, Chief, Boyd, Dana and Tom for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here today and listen. This is a partnership effort and I want to take a moment to ask one of our most important colleagues and partners to come to the podium for a special welcoming message and that's the EPA Regional Administrator, Don Walsh from Region Three. I moseyed up to Philly one day and met in his office and we chatted about the Chesapeake

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and we've come a long way. It's all about relationships and cooperative conservation. Don, welcome, and I'll ask you to come up.

Don Walsh, EPA: Thank you, and I'd like to thank the USDA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service for holding this listening session. I think it's a great effort to engage the Chesapeake Bay partners in a regional approach in cooperative conservation. Both the Bay and the heritage of agriculture are among the most important values to the people of the Mid Atlantic region. And I knew I was going to say that, but I didn't realize how important they would be that the room would be this full and we would have people standing in the back.

I recall calling a press conference to help announce a new national standard for emissions controls that we thought would save 6,000 lives a year and I had nobody show up at the press conference. So around these parts you just say the word "bay" and you get a crowd; you say the word "agriculture," you get a crowd; you say them both together you get standing room only. So this is a great turnout.

The Chesapeake Bay provisions of the Farm Bill will help us

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go a long way to restoring the Bay while also helping to assure a profitable and healthy agricultural environment.

Dick Coombe at NRCS has been a key part of an effort in the past few years to improve the cooperation and the spirit of partnership among the federal agencies with responsibilities touching on the Bay, but also to improve the partnership between the Federal family and the rest of the Chesapeake Bay community. And I'm glad to see so many representatives from the states in the Mid Atlantic region who are here today. Certainly at EPA we get nothing done in any of our programs without our partners in the states. So it's great to see them here as well.

But I think this meeting and your turnout here is evidence of that commitment of NRCS to making that much more effective partnership help us meet our common goals in the Chesapeake Bay. So I just want to thank USDA and I want to say thank you to you, those of you who took the time to prepare comments for this and to show up today to give those comments. And I won't be able to stay for the entire session, but there are folks here from EPA who will be

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staying during the course of the day and you may have an opportunity to chat with them as well. So we look forward to working with you as we work together to protect the Bay and preserve agriculture. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

Dick Coombe: Before we start just a few more comments. Thank you, Don, for those comments; we appreciate your friendship as well as your partnership. I also want to point out a few other key partners. First of all, Jeff Lape, who we forged a really strong working partnership with, he's the Director of the Chesapeake Bay Program for the USEPA. And we've had some really great working relationships on communication and our personal involvement. Jeff, would you please stand? Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

I also would like to recognize Ann Swanson. Ann is the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission and she has worked tirelessly on Bay issues for many years along with Merrill, Rob and many other directors. She is such a strong advocate for the Bay, and would you please stand?

(APPLAUSE)

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And lastly, he can't be here, but Will Baker, President of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, is a great advocate for the Bay and wanted to use all tools. And I'm very pleased at the fact that he's looking at market based initiatives too. And so Will is not here, I know there are reps from his organization. (APPLAUSE)

Also for a moment I would like to introduce a few other NRCS folks spearheading the effort for us at the state level. Craig Derickson, the State Conservationist for Pennsylvania. Hold your applause for all of them. Next of all, Jon Hall, the State Conservationist here at Maryland. Jack Bricker, the State Conservationist from Virginia. For Russ Morgan, Les Stillson, the [Assistant] State Conservationist over in Delaware. Leon Brooks is here for the state of New York, [representing] Ron Alverado [State Conservationist] in New York.

And Herbert Andrick, [Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations] is here for Kevin Wickey, the State Conservationist from West Virginia. And lastly, Rob McAfee, the watershed specialist for the Bay is here also.

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I would like to have them get a round of applause. They're here ... (APPLAUSE)

Chief Lancaster: I note that they all have note pads to take notes. We're going to pay particular attention to all of your comments in all of those states.

Dick Coombe: Very good. Thank you, Chief. I also wanted to recognize Dan Lawson, if he would please stand. Dan's our Bay program expert at national headquarters. And if anyone who has written comments, please submit those to Dan. His contact information is on the screen. And Dan also would like to meet with you. Tom, thank you for having Dan come here today.

We're now going to begin the listening session. We're anxious to get your input. Doug McKalip is going to help us, he's our Director of Legislative Affairs, cue the order of the comments by announcing the current speaker as well as who will be next. If your name is called, please move toward the microphone so that you can begin directly after the preceding speaker finishes. We want to minimize transition time so that we can listen as carefully as we can to the substance.

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Each speaker will be given - will have five minutes - to hit their key points. We'd also be happy to take any full comments in writing for the record. Between you and I, looking at the crowd, try to keep it to three minutes and you know, submit the rest if you need to go over a little bit. So Doug will take care of that. We'll all be listening. If you have questions, chances are we have the same ones, which is why we're holding this session.

And our panelists will not be in a position to enter into a question/answer dialogue. They will be listening closely and working to gain an understanding of your points of view. We have to do a lot. Folks can feel free to circulate in these facilities, get a snack; however, we intend to keep the session going because everyone's input is important. With that done, let's get started.

Doug McKalip: Thank you Dick. And we're really appreciative of the farmers letting us take their time this morning to give us their views. We're very pleased with the number of Cabinet Secretaries and Executive Branch folks we have here

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from each of the states. We're going to start off with the Secretary of Agriculture from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Dennis Wolff.

Male Speaker (MS): Thank you. Good morning everyone. My name is Dennis Wolff and I have the privilege of serving as Secretary of Agriculture for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. I have presented written testimony however I'm not going to read that; I'm just going to make a few comments. First I'd like to thank Secretary Schafer, USDA and NRCS calling this session and allowing me to present our views on behalf of the Governor for how important this program is for Pennsylvania.

Our journey started back in fall, 2005 when we held listening sessions around Pennsylvania. There was one recurring theme expressed by our farmers time and time again: that was the need for additional dollars for new practices to allow our farmers in Pennsylvania to maintain their legacy in environmental stewardship. Their request included reform in the Conservation Title and they suggested that we have \$100 million in a special program

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for nutrient management programs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

They suggested that there should be an increase in share for states that are already investing in the Bay program. They asked for a regional stewardship program and they also asked for enhanced technical assistance, particularly at the farmer level. So we want to thank the Congress of the 2008 Farm Bill; we think it addresses many of these issues. I would like to review a list of Pennsylvania's policies as well as achievements in the Bay restoration. EPA in its most recent calculation shows that Pennsylvania farmers can claim about one-half of the nitrogen reduction in the Bay as it relates to agriculture.

We think this has been accomplished by a number of things. First, Pennsylvania was the first state in the Chesapeake Bay to make nutrient management plans mandatory. Secondly, our nutrient management plans include phosphorous as well as nitrogen. Also Pennsylvania has preserved about 20 percent of its land in the Bay. And also Pennsylvania was the first state to have an approved EPA CAFO program in the

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Chesapeake Bay. So Pennsylvania's Chesapeake Bay compliance program is aggressive and this new funding will certainly be helpful to us.

We think that there are four priority objectives that need to be focused on. First being our riparian buffers and particularly riparian buffers in areas that have livestock or pasture areas. Secondly, cover crops are critical and essential to improving the quality of the Bay and these dollars could help with that. No till conservation or as we say continuous no till or as our No Till Alliance in Pennsylvania uses as their byline [unint] very important in improving water quality in the Bay.

And also additional technical assistance is needed by the states to have some discretion there in terms of whether we have service providers or there may be additional staff at the county level. Other suggestions would include channeling dollars through the EQIP program, keeping it as a separate line item, supporting on the ground practices for working farms, supplement EQIP but do not displace current funding. The goals should also look at a minimum

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baseline for all farms and focus on farms that have not traditionally used these conservation programs.

Also targeting areas that are high in nitrogen and phosphorus load will be essential, and also recommending that a last quarter review be completed so that uncommitted funds can be, at the discretion of the state conservationist, reallocated to different areas that can use them.

So in closing I'd just like to thank NRCS for holding this session today and allowing us to offer Pennsylvania's concerns and Pennsylvania's views on this. I'd like to congratulate everyone who made this a reality. And certainly from Pennsylvania we're very proud of Senator Casey and Senator Becker for their efforts as well as Congressman Holden. And we look forward to the positive impact from these new dollars going forward. Thank you.

Doug McKalip: Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: We have several members of the cabinet here from the state of Maryland. We're going to start off with the Maryland Secretary of Agriculture, Roger Richardson, to be

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followed by the Deputy Secretary for the Department of Natural Resources, Eric Schwaab. Secretary Richardson.

MS: Thank you. I'm Roger Richardson, Secretary of Ag for Maryland. The Governor appointed me back in February a year ago. And it's certainly a pleasure to do the job. It's a pleasure to have visitors from sister states that are here with us today - you mentioned a few - I won't go through that list. But I'm glad that they're here and you all too. Governor O'Malley and Maryland agriculture has made a very strong commitment to addressing issues related to the Chesapeake Bay, especially agriculture benefits to that and the farm environment also.

We believe a healthy Bay will result from an approach that combines technical assistance, financial assistance and regulatory oversight. We have a very large cover crop program in Maryland. I think it was almost 300,000 acres this year, which was a very effective way of helping control ag runoff from agriculture. The conservation delivery system in Maryland is alive and strong and built upon the core technical role by the NRCS. Without NRCS we would all be amiss; the conservation district we work with

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very strongly has been a great big help to us and also hopefully we're a help to them.

We believe a key element to putting more BMPs on the grants for the help of the Bay is to have adequate capacity to deliver those programs. Besides money, NRCS and our districts have to have people to help get it on the land. The farmers respect the conservation districts and work very closely with them. There are updates of this new funding to partner and state agencies to leverage the money to get more bang for our buck. So we certainly are working toward that issue also.

Cooperative agreements with partner agencies and direct program grant support can enhance agriculture stewardship. Our farmers need practical, effective and measurable conservation technology to maintain a sustainable ag administration in Maryland. Ag is the largest industry in the state of Maryland. It provides more dollars to the state than any business in the state. We stand ready to assist NRCS in developing and installing the right BMPs wherever they're needed. And with that it's my proud

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pleasure to introduce Eric Schwaab, Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Eric.

MS: Thank you Mr. Secretary, thank you members of the panel, Chief Lancaster. We appreciate you being here for us today. We more appreciate you having been here for us in the Bay region for a long time. We very much appreciate the work of Congress in creating this opportunity for us and I just want to make a few comments about the opportunities associated with best utilizing this money to make measurable differences for the Chesapeake Bay region.

Here in Maryland we have a long history of folks with limited resources to try to do a very tough job. We have ramped up that effort through the last 18 months through a process here that we call Bay State. This is the work of Governor O'Malley and his Bay cabinet to bring Secretary Richardson, the Department of Ag Resources and others that you will hear from here shortly to organize and deploy resources in ways that convey the biggest difference on the ground.

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And what we would suggest to you very simply is that both here in Maryland and with our other partners around the Bay region that there is an opportunity to utilize some of the principles that were embodied in the Bay State process in a way that can give us collectively the greatest opportunity to see measurable results as a result of not only this focused money, but many of the other investments that we all make in the Bay region.

And let me just very quickly touch on a couple of those principles. The first one as you already heard Secretary Richardson refer to is targeted use of resources. Targeted both in a geographic sense and a sense of the practices that can be employed most efficiently and economically. Inherent in that targeting process, and I think a key principle before you here today in this deliberation, is the idea of targeting to a scale where we can have the prospect of making a measurable difference.

So one of the things that we have done in the Bay cabinet through the Bay State process is, and utilized particularly a new Chesapeake Bay trust fund to identify very specific

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watersheds where we are first putting the majority of our money in a way that we hope will allow us to achieve measurable results in water quality and for living resources.

The third principle speaks specifically to the idea of leveraging. We would very much like to build on our past relationships with you and with our other Bay conservation partners to identify ways to bring dollars together so that we can leverage, maximize engagement and leverage the resources that we collectively bring together in a way that can yield measurable results.

Finally, this principle of measurement. [Unint] is built on the idea of measurement - we think that again if we focus resources at the right scale, leverage our partnerships - we can yield measurable results, which is something that has been frankly a frustration here in the Bay region for many of our stakeholders for a long period of time. And if we can apply these principles that we have been applying here in Maryland through the Bay State process more collectively with these new resources we think

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that that will be something that would be of great benefit to the citizens of the region. Thank you.

MS: I'm Bob Summers. Thank you, [Deputy] Secretary of the Department of the Environment.

MS: I just want to emphasize a couple of points, additional to what my colleagues on the Bay cabinet had to say. First of all, we certainly need to implement our existing practices the best way we can, but we really need to also focus on new tools to enhance environmental management. The first item in the legislation deals with improving water quality. We need to control the nutrient and sediment that are causing those water quality standards violations in the Bay. Market based approaches in particular are very important to this effort, including bundling of different practices that deal with both water quality and air quality issues.

In the area of animal waste management in particular in Maryland we are focusing recently on animal waste management issues particularly in the poultry sector and dealing with proper short term storage of poultry litter and other ways to try to improve our utilization is a very

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important resource, absolutely critical. In order to do this we're going to have to provide the technical training and technical assistance to the farmers.

That's going to require as Secretary Richardson mentioned partnering with both the federal, state and private sector in terms of bringing that technical capability to the farmers so they can develop and implement the most effective, comprehensive nutrient management plans that will apply to BMPs at each step in the process and truly be the best management practices.

And as Eric mentioned at the end of his [unint], including strategic monitoring to document both the cost and the effectiveness of these practices is absolutely critical. Back to one of my first points about dealing with market based approaches in implementing this: If we don't have good information on both the cost and effectiveness these market based approaches such as nutrient trading are really not going to work.

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And to talk a little bit more in the effectiveness area I'd like to introduce Dr. Frank Cole from our University of Maryland who's going to hit clean up for this group.

MS: I'm Frank Cole from the University of Maryland College of Agriculture and Natural Resources. I'm representing our Dean, Cheng-i Wei who couldn't be here today. The University of Maryland College of Ag and Natural Resources along with the University Center for Environmental Science are active partners with our state agencies and our Federal partners to help advance and accelerate our restoration of Chesapeake Bay [unint] best technologies and farm management practices.

It is critical that we work together to assure accountability in our effort to renew the Chesapeake Bay - understanding the effectiveness and efficiency of agricultural practices is vitally important. We must be able to document our successes. On the other hand, we also must be able to understand what we did to succeed. We must design monitoring and evaluation criteria so we can reliably quantify the effectiveness and practices that we put on the land.

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As a result we will be able to position, be in a position to provide reliable data to support, adapt a management strategy that allows us to adjust program priorities based on all the data. It is critical that we continue to promote the development and adoption of new agricultural and nutrient management technologies to provide a bridge between technology development and conservation practice implementation on the farm. We must help the farmer adapt and we must help the farmers adopt.

Finally, we must be nimble in our approach. We must generate measurable outcomes. We must use data we generate to make real time, force corrections along the way as we need to. Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: As we go to our friends, from the East, from Delaware and I'd like to ask Andy Burger, President of the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts to come forward. Andy is also the Chair of the New Castle Conservation Districts and he is a farmer as well. Mr. Burger.

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MS: [Unintelligible], members of the panel, good morning. My name is Andy Burger and I'm here this morning on behalf of the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts. I know there are many speakers waiting their chance at the microphones so I will be very brief. First, 40 percent of Delaware drains into the Chesapeake Bay. So what happens in our state effects the Chesapeake Bay and the tributaries of Maryland's Eastern Shore.

I'm told that Delaware constitutes one percent of the Bay's 64,000 square mile watershed and contributes to two percent of its nutrient surface. As a head water state, Delaware's held to the same stringent water quality targets and natural resources protection goals as Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Delaware's conservation partnerships: our three conservation districts, USDA, NRCS, and Delaware Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Department of Agriculture, Delaware's Nutrient Management Commission and [unint] Division of Natural Resources stand ready to ensure that the new Farm Bill Chesapeake Bay

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program fund will be delivered to Delaware's agricultural producers to address the Bay's new priority and nutrient management challenges.

We have a track record of working together with animal producers and row crop farmers to get the job done without a lot of fuss and fanfare. Delaware State Technical Committee has consistently focused on Farm Bill conservation programs such as EQIP, CRP, CREP, and the Farmland Preservation program and programs in the Delaware watershed that drain into the Chesapeake Bay.

Delaware's three conversation districts have targeted our state funded fellowship program to assist producers in planting thousands of acres of cover crop in all three counties. The nutrient and sediment challenges of the Chesapeake Bay remain a significant priority for Delaware. Governor Ruth Ann Minner endorsed a 2007 Chesapeake Bay Commission report that detailed the conservation opportunities that a Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill program could address.

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Commission's Executive Director Ann Swanson deserves the credit for her great work in reaching out to farmers, officials and interest groups throughout the entire Bay watershed as she prepared this report. In conclusion the Delaware Association of Conservation Districts and our state and federal partners stand ready to do our part to assist in reducing excess nutrients and sediments from entering the Chesapeake Bay and the Bay tributaries.

We believe that the new Farm Bill funding should be distributed fairly and equitably throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, including Delaware, because Delaware producers are going to be expected to meet the same nutrient reduction goals as the producers in Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity. Thank you very much.

Doug McKalip: Next we're going to hear from, call on our friends from the Commonwealth of Virginia and ask Mr. Ricky Rash to come forward. Ricky is the President of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. I know Ricky has to be back to a doctor's appointment in Virginia later today. Hopefully the traffic

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has improved and we may need to let you go first.

Following Ricky will be from the West Virginia Poultry Association. We'll have Dale Walker come to the microphone next. Ricky?

MS: Thanks. Good morning. My alarm went off at the regular time this morning, five minutes before four, and so I ended up going to milk a herd of cows this morning, I got dressed to come up here today. And I travel five miles before I got back into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I live in the southern rivers, it's a non Bay watershed area of Virginia, but as a president and a farmer of conservation I feel it's important that I come today and represent Virginia, at least partially for the Chesapeake Bay region.

Virginia has 47 soil conservation districts and I can say that we're pleased with the progress of the Farm Bill regarding the Chesapeake Bay. We too are under the EPA mandate and we understand that the time constraints that we are all under to clean up the health of the Chesapeake Bay. However I'm also pleased to say that Virginia's legislature and its gubernatorial administration has taken great strides to allocate approximately \$20 million for ag, BMP

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cost share programs here in the Commonwealth in the current fiscal year that we're in.

Unfortunately the estimates to clean up Virginia's water in the Chesapeake Bay and the whole state of Virginia are well in excess of \$1 billion. So any help that Virginia can get is of great importance. Only 60 percent of Virginia drains into the Chesapeake Bay. But those districts represent all or a portion of the Chesapeake Bay and stand ready to assist NRCS field staff in a mission of non point source reduction.

The districts are the grassroots agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia are operating under the guidelines and engineering specifications of NRCS. And I am very proud to say that many of our clientele are farmers and land owners could not tell the difference between an NRCS employee and a district employee when the farm business was made. I hope that you agree that this is a win/win situation for water quality as the ownership of water quality belongs to all of our citizens.

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One of the biggest challenges to putting the ag BMPs on the ground of any kind is selling the program. And it takes staff, it takes time, it takes farm business. In Virginia, the Virginia Department of Agriculture says there's about 44,000 farmers in the state of Virginia. So if you extrapolate the numbers a little bit and say that 60 percent of those reside in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, we're looking at 24- to 26,000 farmers.

And within Virginia the Secretary of Natural Resources with the assistance of the Department of Conservation and Recreation is the lead non point source agency, says that we need to hit at least 90 percent of the agricultural acres in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to lead to reductions assigned to Virginia. So if you again extrapolate the numbers we're looking at thousands of farm businesses, pushing 20,000 different businesses. So with the staff that the districts bring and the staff that NRCS brings we must have the technical assistance to train the district staff and we must have the bodies for the engineering assistance that goes with those BMPs once they're allocated.

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We also have to understand that when we're selling that we're going on a land owner's farm and telling him that while we think you have a pretty good farm we want to help you make it better. And with the average age of farmers in Virginia at 56 years old, you're dealing with a lot of clientele that are not too friendly to being told that they're not doing quite as good a job as they should be. So gaining technical assistance is very important.

The other issue that I think Virginia should be concerned about is the allocation program. We want it out, we want it fair. We would like to see that the agriculture non point source acres in Virginia are given a priority and once that farmer comes to Virginia we need to be able to have the flexibility within the programs to leverage those Federal dollars with the state dollars that we have allocated. And we have five priority practices that Virginia has targeted and those are cover crops, nutrient management, continuous no till, livestock exclusion and riparian buffers.

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These do not represent all of the suite of practices that we have in Virginia, but they are the most policy effected that we have. And the equity of distribution among the Bay states is essential to the health of the Chesapeake Bay. And a healthy Bay is a serious economic generator for the entire Bay region. I believe as a representative of districts that Virginia is the best resource to allocate the program dollars once they get to Virginia.

However that formula works out within the Bay region, Virginia can have its own listening session with Jack Bricker and his management team and all of the partners, districts. All of the conservation partners of the agriculture and conservation community in Virginia can help Jack Bricker and his staff allocate those program dollars. Whether they go for cost share or we have the flexibility to shift them to conservation easements.

In conclusion I just want to reiterate the need for technical assistance because we have to sell and it takes bodies to sell. Not every farm visit will result in a producer signing up. We need equity in the allocation of

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funding and we need the flexibility to leverage dollars in Virginia as best we see fit. With that, thank you.

Doug McKalip: Dale Walker with the West Virginia Poultry Association and next we'll have Lynne Hoot from the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

MS: As he said I'm Dale Walker, President of the West Virginia Poultry Association. And the West Virginia Poultry Association represents approximately 350 poultry farms in West Virginia, which all those poultry farms are in the five Kenwar [ph] counties of the Bay. Four of these five counties are the top ag counties in the state of West Virginia. Farmer participation has been very active for many years. In the mid 90s the NRCS program, PL534 was a very successful program. West Virginia currently targets their [unint] funding to the Opeca [ph] Sleepy Creek where there's no poultry and in the south branch Lost River and Mill Creek which is poultry county, poultry watersheds.

West Virginia cost share for 2007 was \$12 million for all 55 counties in the state. Estimated cost for agriculture to meet 2010 goals is over \$200 million for non-Bay draining counties. Those goals include transporting of 12

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million pounds of poultry litter out of the watershed per year, developing and maintaining 520,000 acres of conservation farm programs, install stream water and vent with fencing within 290,000 acres, install 10,000 acres of forest buffers, implement and maintain 160,000 acres of new stream management plans.

But funding is needed for this. The litter transport program was a very successful program which all funding has been cut for that. Also another option would be a system to pelletize litter could possibly be used for alternative fuel to heat the poultry houses. Current funding has been completely eliminated for all this. We need additional personnel to go along with this funding to carry through with the goals.

With fuel costs and everything, we need more than 50/50 cost sharing for these programs. The farmers are stretched to the limit with the high fuel costs and grain. West Virginia Poultry Association recommends a program of possibly 80/20. This includes your storage, off stream

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water and fencing, things of this type. Thank you for the opportunity to voice opinions.

Doug McKalip: Thank you.

Doug McKalip: The next speaker will be Lynne Hoot and then Ann Swanson from the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

FS: [Unintelligible] welcome to Annapolis and to Maryland.

Actually my comments are going to be broader than just the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts; I will also be focusing on NRCS [unint]. But I happen to be in a position where I work for many agricultural organizations here in Maryland including the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

I also work with the Mid Atlantic Certified Crop Advisor program where we have certified crop advisors that provide technical assistance to our farmers. And I also work with some agricultural production groups, the Maryland Grain Producers and Maryland Pork Producers. And in fact the hat that I wear covers all of those issues and we are on the same page with the issues that I want to present to you.

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But first of all I want to make some comments about NASCD [ph]. And I just want to say that this is not intended in a negative context; we have a wonderful partnership here. But I do want to say that in the last administrations here in Annapolis we have spent hours trying to work out how we could produce NCRS programs to the farm with less employees from NRCS.

We have staffing cutbacks and it really has significantly impacted our delivery system. And what we're really short of in Maryland is a technical assistance base working out soil conservation. Our state has made a tremendous commitment and our districts are stepping up more and more to the plate and now look at opportunities through the grant process to include staffing. But we really do lack technical assistance to deliver the programs.

And we are a well respected delivery system to the farmers and the farmer has seen a development at the last convention. We have to go to the farmers now. We have to do more and [unint], those people always walk into our doors. We'd like to see more funding through cooperative

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agreements go directly to the soil conservation district and we'd like to see emphasis on the cost share but also on staffing. Through the certified crop advisors we'd like to make sure that they have the opportunity. These are the friends of Maryland farmers who they'd like to work with, the technical assistance for nutrient management, integrating pest management [unint]. Those are the worker delivery systems. And we'd like to encourage funding for those things.

And again for the grain producers and the pork producers we like working with our traditional suppliers and our traditional partner support system. And we're very insistent that resources come to NRCS and work through the EQIP programs as suggested in the Farm Bill program. We like the traditional programs. We want to be effective. Traditionally we need to know what's working and what's not working.

I understand there's some studies being done on BMPs and we want to maximize the use of the most efficient practices.

From an innovation standpoint there is a lot of innovation

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we can use. And this isn't brand new, but we really do need to look at placement of nutrients on the farm fields. We want to help the farmers work with GPS and some equipment that not all of them have. No till records and subsistence to do no till and still apply [unint] manure and particularly on the shore where we're dealing with poultry litter and improving poultry litter application.

Some of the research is coming out of the wire [unint] research and education suggests that no till and poultry litter applications are not the two best things to do together. We want to maintain no till, but we want to make sure that our applications are doing well. So I think we want to be innovative and at the same time strengthen our traditional programs, particularly more technical systems. And one of the things that I have to stress with my MASCD hat is the fact that if you look at our industry, if you drove here today and many of you in Washington you know what it looks like, this is a very urban area and a lot of our districts also work with a lot of urban work.

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We know the districts, we know that NRCS isn't going to take care of those, but we do want them there first, for technical advice when we need it for those urban programs. We're involved with sediment and erosion control and these are things that also impact the Chesapeake Bay. So we rely on NRCS to wear a bigger hat and we look forward to your continued working with us and thank you for the opportunity that we've had today. We've come a long way, but we still have a big job to do. Thank you.

FS: Thank you very much. My name is Ann Swanson. I'm the Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Commission, which is a tri-state legislative commission working for the general assembly sitting with the Congress. First and absolutely foremost I'd like to thank you for calling this session. I think it really shows nationwide the kind of commitment that you have to making this matter, and Chief Lancaster, Dick Coombe and others at the podium and beyond, I understand the kind of efforts you've made to make this happen and ultimately to make this program work. And we will stand by you strongly.

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With me are two other members of our staff, Merrill Rob [ph] our Pennsylvania director and Matt Mullen [ph] our Maryland director. You can rely on all of us on the staffing level. I also have to recognize George Wolfe, one of our long time members of the Commission and an agricultural expert, who for six year's heavy lifting to work this program through. George stood by it every minute of the way. And I think you can also rely on him and his expertise as a farmer and agricultural specialist.

In my short time before you I basically want to make eight points. We will be submitting written testimony, but I think it's very important to tell the highlights. Let me also say we are focusing specifically on your Chesapeake Bay program here. Obviously you have many, many more programs to implement and we will be active in helping you to make the right decisions for the Bay watershed with that regard as well.

But specifically for this program let me make a point, the first has to do with "additionality," and that is that this \$188 million is separate and distinct and should be viewed

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that way. The Congressional Budget Office has scored the Chesapeake Bay watershed program as a separate program with additional funding and NRCS should act accordingly. You yourself acknowledged only 80 percent of the prior Farm Bill dollars came; if you need us we are here to make sure that you can deliver.

The second has to do with rulemaking. You have 264 rulemaking mandates right now; 168 of them in the Farm Bill. Our compassion is with you. And in this notion what we suggest is that you go for a notice of funding availability or NOFA for the additional Chesapeake Bay funding to allow measured decision making regardless or regarding this important program.

The third has to do with highly efficient cost effective practices. I would be redundant from the other speakers if I stayed on this at length, but let it suffice to say that this program is about doing things differently. It's about choosing highly efficient, cost effective practices, but also that can be implemented and take effect quickly.

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There are other programs like EQIP that fund some of the very long term programs, whether it's manure storage or others. And we encourage you to look here for what you can get and the biggest bang for your buck in the fastest amount of time - reach for the proven practices that we know that work.

The fourth has to do with sub watershed scale. You've got to do it at a scale we can manage. We strongly encourage you to reach for the eight digit hydraulic unit codes. That HUC will allow us, and that's the hierarchical numeric code, that will allow us to focus. Fortunately USGS has developed those maps using the Sparrow model, and so we have that resource available to make those strategic decisions.

The fifth has to do with innovation. Use these dollars to innovate, but innovate with proven practices. This is not about implementing unknown practices. This is not about research, this is not about development; this is about sweetening the pot to make sure that we're doing the right thing.

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The sixth has to do with technical assistance. You cannot do this program without technical assistance. We strongly encourage you to reach for the private firms, the NGOs, the states, the conservation districts, in no apparent order. They are equipped - work with them for the technical assistance.

The seventh has to do with allocation of funds. Absolutely manage this program as a Bay wide fund. Do not fall into the trap of just giving out the dollars in each situation. That's what the other programs EQIP and WHIP and CSP do. In this situation we need to strategically focus that decision making into the [unint] watersheds where it will matter the most.

And the eighth point, which I'd like to make has to do with monitoring and evaluation. It is absolutely critical that we document monitoring and evaluation. It's our understanding, at least for right now, that most of these dollars will be focused on implementation; therefore we ask you, you know your programs best, reach for the CCPIS,

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reach for the AWEF program, reach for the other programs that can fund research monitoring assessment and couple it with this program so we can really document for the nation what we were able to do.

You've been asked to spend nationwide taxpayer dollars on the Chesapeake. A lot is at stake to prove that we can do it. And we stand at the Chesapeake Bay Commission ready to help you at any levels that you need help. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: I'd like to ask Lee McDaniel to come forward now with the Maryland Association of State Conservation Districts. He's the President of MASCD. And then it will be Jennifer Harry with the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau.

MS: Good morning Chief Lancaster and panel. I'm Lee McDaniel. I'm President of the Maryland Association of State Conservation Districts. I'm also the legislative representative at NACD, Northeast. So I'm not speaking on their behalf but I do cover those other states as well. I'd like to start off simply by saying that our partnership works. We've had 50, 60 years of partnership where we've gained the credibility and confidence of our farmers and

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landowners. And that's something that shouldn't be taken lightly. It's something that we should be able to build on.

I think you also need to know that districts are distinct. Each one has different priorities and different specialties which they are equipped to deal with. The reason I bring that up is we need to have locally led implementation in this program. Certainly the best management practice that's most effective on the Eastern Shore might not be the same best management practice that's most effective in Piedmont. And the same can be said for the Mathis [ph] in Western Maryland.

We have locally led work groups. I think we can continue to expand on that with this program. I want to get down into the weeds a little bit of how this program is going to be managed, because the first thing I saw when the Farm Bill was passed was I called NACD and said well, what was the intent of the ag committee in Congress of administering this program? And the report back from the members of the committee was we don't want to create a whole new

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management program, we want to work within what already exists and possibly enhance it. So I think we need to keep that in mind as well.

What are the elements of managing this program? Clearly we need the technical people out there to administer it. And Maryland of course we've been dealing with how do you apply that technical assistance without creating more brick and mortar and without creating more permanent employees. I think we can address that simply the same way we have with our 319 positions that we've had in our districts. We can hire individuals or businesses on a contractual basis and have them report back to the districts.

By doing this you also can have the systematic process of recording. The districts also already have to record their results through the Maryland Bay State, and then a different reporting through NRCS. We don't need a third type of recording. They need to keep that as simple as possible. The other thing that's been an issue for us recently is of course has been NRCS security. If we start outsourcing things we're going to need to make sure that

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you maintain that security as it has been. And along the same lines we have to recognize the fact that the cooperators are volunteers who work with us and their privacy also needs to be protected.

Another issue is the oversight of work if it's done by third parties. What we have learned in the past when we've had technical service providers outside of our regular employees that the projects and the technical stuff still has to go before NRCS engineer people to be approved or to be stamped. And that needs to be considered as well, because it will be a cost to districts and to NRCS even if things are outsourced in terms of [unint] and also for the oversight. So there will be additional costs for the districts even if they don't have additional employees when the work's done on a third party basis.

I think that the other issue that we need to think about and it's one that the districts are always dealing with: do we prioritize projects or do we deal with customers on a first come, first served basis? And I'm not going to be here to argue that because my time is about to run out, but

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it's something that we need to take a look at how we're going to handle that initiative. So I thank you for having this listening session; if I can be of any help just give me a call.

MS: Thank you.

FS: Good morning. I'm Jennifer Harry, Natural Resources Director of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau. My statement is being offered on behalf of the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau and a 44,000 farm and world family members of our organization. We'd like to thank Secretary Schafer and the NRCS for this opportunity to provide comments. Entering these activities has been a collaborative effort. But there is still work to be done: Pennsylvania's programs of State and Federal assistance provided to farmers under these programs have significantly reduced nutrient and sediment loadings in Pennsylvania waterways that feed into the Bay over the last several decades.

Pennsylvania's agricultural and conservation program has not been developed in a vacuum. These programs and funding opportunities established by these programs are done with input from a variety of sources, including the Pennsylvania

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Farm Bureau and other representatives of the agricultural community. Entering the Chesapeake Bay strategy for nutrient and sediment reduction and a program to develop under the strategy to help Pennsylvania reach nutrient and sediment goals were developed through an extensive process for agencies as representatives of the regulatory community discussed and attempted to reconcile ideas and activities for water quality.

Given a degree of effort and program development that is already taken place in Pennsylvania we strongly believe that additional Chesapeake monies to be provided under the Farm Bill for Pennsylvania should be directed at fortified existing agricultural conservation programs. We think it would be a serious mistake for additional monies to be used for the creation and development of programs that radically deviate from Pennsylvania's existing program.

Our programs are basically sound. And any ineffectiveness of our existing programs are not to due to a lack of planning rather to a lack of funding to implement these plans. We would also stress the need to assure that

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additional funding to be provided under the [unint] for Pennsylvania not to be used for the purpose or effect of reducing agricultural productivity in Pennsylvania farms within the Bay watershed.

While nutrient and sediment loading policies exist in agricultural areas in the Bay watershed programs that reduce productivity of farm lands will have a significant detrimental affect on Pennsylvania's agricultural community. If farms cannot remain viable chances are real for farms and lands that were used for farming to be used for other non-farm reasons. Widespread conversions of farms to non-farm uses will create a new set of problems for management of nutrient and sediment loading in the Bay watershed.

While programs such as [unint] forest and stream buffers have their place, excessive commitments of Farm Bill monies in these areas will have a significantly detrimental affect on productivity and economic viability of farm operations in the Bay watershed. We would also strongly encourage one of the primary objectives to get accomplished through

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additional funding to Pennsylvania would be to significantly increase the number of technical personnel and improve technical assistance available to Pennsylvania farmers for development and implementation of agricultural best management practices.

Many current families understand what generally needs to be done to reduce nutrient and sediment loading. But they do not adequately understand how to do it in a manner that is both environmentally effective and economically feasible for their operation. Thank you.

Doug McKalip: Next we'd like to ask to come to the podium Mr. Bill Rohrer who is the Administrator of the Delaware Nutrient Management Commission. And following Bill we'll have Mr. Jim Michael who's a farmer from West Virginia.

MS: Good morning and thank you. I bring greetings from Delaware and bring greetings from the Secretary of Ag, Michael Scuse, our Secretary of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, Tom Hughes. I'd also like to point out some of the folks within Delaware that are here this morning. We

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have folks from the conservation districts. We have folks from the Department of Ag and also from the Natural Resources and Environmental Control. Also we have representation from the [unint] that operates in Delaware.

I think the common theme, or at least the message that we would like to provide deals with the implementation funds that many of you know - regulating nutrient runoff and ag runoff is not an easy task, but it's even more difficult paying for many of the projects that we recommend. In Delaware we feel that we've addressed a strategic foundation in dealing with many of the nutrient runoff and ag runoff challenges.

We've established an accountability program, a mandatory nutrient management program where we've certified over 1,700 farmers and other nutrient handlers. We have an infrastructure of consultants and nutrient planners to help farmers and other nutrient handlers. We can account for 99 percent of the farm land in Delaware under the mandatory nutrient management planning. That's roughly 453,000 acres or about 1,500 different farmers. We have a functional

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CAFO program where 15 farms are operating under the federally mandated CAFO program.

We've looked at some of the costs in implementing the state and nutrient management law and other associated requirements and last year alone we accounted for about \$8 million that went to developing plans and implementing plans. We've put a significant amount of resources and funds into strategically moving excess poultry litter within Delaware. We were able to move about 90,000 tons of excess poultry litter to an alternative market for land application to a new ag [unint] plant. And that is a key partnership. It was a key partnership program last year.

We went to NRCS and NRCS did partner with us and contributed about \$90,000 to help move some of the excess poultry litter. So these are many examples of a partnership solution in Delaware and we would like to continue that and focus on a lot of the farm specific practices that need to be implemented from the edge of the field to the 2,000 miles of drainage ditches throughout Delaware that we can

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reduce some of the nutrient runoff around those ditches or clean the ditches.

We clearly need to continue to strategically deal with the nutrient runoff issues and more specifically the farm specific best management practices. So thank you.

MS: Jim Michael, Martha Springs [ph], West Virginia, farmer, conservationist. I want to say a 50 year conservationist plus, including 35 with the Soil Conservation Service, the last 17 a full time farmer. So naturally I'm going to start on the watershed approach. We need to, and we've heard many speakers say it today, to implement the Bay program more prominently. We need to refocus on the watershed approach; that is local watershed committees, that is targeting problem areas.

And in these we need to step up the agricultural practice implementation; those that will control runoff. I'm concerned that, I should say too I believe water is our number one issue here in the Northeast of the future.

Water. It is in my state. So we got to do the program to

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carry that out. I'm glad the Chief is here because I need to remind him in recent years somehow we lost the watershed division in the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Somehow that got closed out. We better be thinking about bringing it back to implement these strategic water programs in our country.

It's been said a lot today and I'm so proud that people that said it: that technical assistance is really the key. We look at technical assistance as you have a staff out there that meet with the land users, land owners and they don't do it overnight, but develop that relationship to put these conservation measures on the land. And we really see the need for NRCS stepping up that technical assistance, maybe just as important as this financial assistance is to have those leaders out there.

We're hurting in the area of engineering and watershed specialties to work with the farmer and land users. My friends from the West Virginia Poultry Association related to the DEPs maybe three or four priority watersheds. I happen to live in one of them, Sleepy Creek Watershed.

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Being a conservationist I naturally steered the local committee, put this plan together in DEP and state conservation agencies accordingly. We needed more NRCS help there in planning. We had to do it almost without because they're loaded with the other programs. This approach is going to take technical assistance, just as important as dollars.

And again I'd like to reiterate the assistance should include technical people that can deal with land users and deal with water management. We're still in an era of needing to store storm water to control water runoff as well as treating the new management and all the other issues. EQIP has served well in our state. We do miss, again on the watershed, we miss the PL534 and PL566 that went to the [unint].

Shifting to other issues - agriculture is important in our area. It's a preferred land use. We need to develop a partner approach. The Ranch and Farm Land Protection program is very helpful in the Chesapeake Bay and our state to assist those farmers that want to commit the land for

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potential use in agriculture, which is very helpful to the open space. Looking at other programs I don't know enough about Conservation Stewardship [Program] yet and I'm concerned. The old CSP had broader reins than we ever got to use.

So to the NRCS we need to look at this stewardship program. Again focus it against the key land owners, the key farmers to get the job done. Concern about this paying of payment of a limited amount per acre: I don't know if that will really reward the conservation. I really appreciate the opportunity of being here today and NRCS conducting this session and look forward to a better Bay. Thank you.

(APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: There are a few folks here with our Congressional office, at least in the Maryland delegation. Senator Ben Cardin has a staffer, Mike Burke who is here. Mike is going to make a few remarks. Also Gary Decker with Congressman Sarbanes, if you can stand up and identify yourself. And as always, Gary is available if folks have any issues they'd like to bring up with him afterwards.

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Following remarks with Mr. Burke from Senator Cardin's office we'll hear from Eileen McLellan. Mike [unint].

MS: Great. Thanks so much. My name is Mike Burke, Projects Director for Senator Ben Cardin. And Bailey Fine [ph], the Senator's state director is also here this morning. I wanted to give you a quick perspective from those that wrote the law and what we had in mind. The House side, we've got Congressman Sarbanes here, there are a number of members of Congress that were on the House side which were particularly important, Congressman Holden from Pennsylvania, Congressman Goodlatte from Virginia are particularly noteworthy.

But I also wanted to call out Congressman Chris Van Hollen from Maryland who probably was more instrumental in drafting and helping to usher through this legislation than anyone else. On the Senate side Senator Casey is the only member of the Chesapeake Bay watershed states that is represented on the agriculture committee. He played obviously a key role. The senators asked Senator Cardin to play a coordinating role on all of the 12 senators within

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the watershed in order to make sure that the Chesapeake interests were properly reflected in this Farm Bill.

And to that end there were three things that we wanted to try to focus on and just specifically make note of. Number one, in the Bill, the legislation's purpose is clear. I won't read you all of the sections of the reasons for the legislation but it says in the establishment purpose clause that the Secretary shall assist producers in implementing conservation activities on agricultural lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for the purposes of number one, improving water quality.

There are others that are listed, but I think that continues to be the focus of what this legislation is about. There are within that a number of watersheds that are specifically called out for special attention, the Susquehanna, the Potomac, the Shenandoah and the Putaxent. The first two, the Susquehanna and the Potomac, account for about 70 percent of the freshwater flow into the Chesapeake Bay. When you add in those other major tributaries you're talking about a very substantial portion of the freshwater

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flow into the Chesapeake Bay. These are our key drainage areas; those are the ones that need attention.

The more important thing than those particular watersheds that were called out was the fact that as we've heard other speakers here say the attention has to be done on the watershed basis, whether it's the large watersheds we're talking about here, sub watersheds or down to the six unit HUC units that were mentioned earlier. Those are the kinds of approaches that need to be taken for the implementation.

Number two, besides the focus on water quality, number two is targeting. The legislation again, we had had in an earlier version of the legislation some language talking about the need for NRCS and for USDA to be doing some targeting work. That was scrapped with the recognition that a lot of the targeting work has already been done. We know where the hot spots are. The Chesapeake Bay program has developed an awful lot of useful tools to help us direct where those conservation dollars should go. As Ann Swanson said earlier the importance here is not that the dollars be spread evenly across every watershed in every state, the

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focus is on water quality improvements and that means focus on the hot spots.

And finally let me talk about the need for the dollars. As we've heard from so many of our farmers, people from Secretary Richardson and Deputy Secretary Buddy Hanson in Maryland have been telling us that our farmers are ready to do the job but they needed the funds to do it. And that's what this legislation provides, \$188 million of mandatory funds that are available for conservation purposes. These funds are additive. They are in addition to all of the funds that are available for the conservation programs that our states are normally available for.

Let me quote again from the Congressional Record: Senator Cardin which on the floor of the Senate when we were doing the consideration of the Bill asked the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee, Senator Harkin and the ranking Republican member, Senator Chambliss, did you want to have a conversation on the floor. Senator Harkin said this funding is separate from EQIP; it is not intended to offset funding allocated under that program.

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Senator Chambliss added that the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Conservation program to be implemented by the NRCS in addition to EQIP or any other existing conservation program. These dollars are meant to be extra dollars for the conservation programs in the Chesapeake region. So those are the three messages that I want to leave you with. Focus on water quality, focus on targeting and that these dollars are additive. Thanks for your time. (APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: Eileen McLlellan with the Environmental Defense Fund followed by Matt Ehrhart with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation and Scott Sickvohm from the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

Female Speaker (FS): Good morning. I'm Eileen McClellan from the Environmental Defense Fund. And first thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. We will be submitting written comments but I want to basically highlight a few important points which will have some familiarity because they've been brought up by some of previous speakers. But they are so important I think they should be reiterated.

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The first to follow on Mike Burke's comments that you just heard, the importance of this additional funding. We will continue to see the routine allocations of this report. You'll see the routine allocation of EQIP, CSP and the other Farm Bill programs. We would prefer that the funding here clearly be additional to that and that there not be any reduction of the routine allocations as an offset to that. We're happy to work with you. We understand this is beyond NRCS's control, but we are very happy to work with you in discussions with [unint], Congress and others to ensure that this is the case.

Secondly, we think it's very important that there be a strategic plan for the use of these funds. Ann Swanson mentioned earlier the use of a notice of funding availability as a way of developing that strategic plan so that all in the region have an opportunity to comment and so that the tax payers who are ultimately funding this program are able to see how the dollars will be directed.

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Thirdly, last year we published a report called Farming for Clean Water, which I think we shared with many of you there. And in that report we drew attention to the need for prioritization: prioritization of specific geographic areas. We know, as others have mentioned, which are the sub watersheds which currently deliver the greatest nutrient sediment flows to the Bay and therefore provide the greatest opportunity to reduce those levels, but in addition to targeting of the practices which will make the greatest benefit in those watersheds.

Clearly this is not a one size fits all approach across the Bay or even from state to state. We need to have the right practices in the right places. And in many cases those practices are advanced practices beyond what is typically supported through the existing EQIP allocations and I'm thinking here things such as dairy feed management, precision agriculture and enhanced nutrient management, continuous no till and so on.

These are not rocket science practices, but they are not at the moment the recipients of much funding. We would like

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to see that changed and we offer as an example what Maryland NRCS has been able to do through a tiered payment where farmers receive additional payments for higher levels of management for these practices that do so much to reduce nutrients and sediment.

And you have heard finally from almost every speaker here of the need for enhanced technical assistance. Marketing these programs to farmers and getting the practices on the ground is the key challenge for restoring the Chesapeake Bay. And we would encourage that the state conservationists at each state in the Bay watershed develop a plan which will identify how that marketing and how each will be accomplished using not only the resources of NRCS itself but looking to the private sector of the technical service providers, NGOs, the state agencies and others to build in and advance the partnership that will be needed to deliver these practices on the ground.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these suggestions and we are ready to work with you and look forward to

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helping advance the course of a clean Chesapeake Bay.

Thanks.

MS: Hi, I'm Matt Ehrhart - I'm the Pennsylvania Executive Director of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. On behalf of Will Baker and the Foundation I'd like to thank Chief Lancaster and the rest of the panel for convening this listening session today. I'd also like to thank our Federal delegation and all the partners - many of who are [unint] for making this funding a reality. We'll be submitting more comprehensive written comments.

I'd like to say, first of all I've been privileged to have an ongoing working partnership with Craig Derrickson and the Pennsylvania NRCS - working with hundreds of farmers delivering thousands of miles of CREP buffers. And some of the lessons learned there are things we've tried to apply to this thought process. In order to make a significant impact on the landscape we need to keep our programs clear, simple, minimize additional bureaucracy and have an effective and efficient implementation structure.

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And I think the comments which I'll make in key points follow that outline. As has been said previously these Chesapeake Bay funds need to be additional and supplemental to other existing programs and we need to deliver them through existing effective tools such as EQIP with separate record keeping and prioritization to make sure that the key on the ground practices get on the ground. The second thing I'd like to focus on is technical assistance. As I think has been noted over and over here we have to figure out how to appropriately address this and I think ultimately means broader development and establishment of technical service provider-ship programs, both through conservation districts and through NGOs and other entities who are able to provide that service.

Additionally I think we need to recognize that part of that discussion has to include being an outreach, to penetrate the farmers and the land owners who are not being addressed or enrolled in current programs. To ultimately have the same subset of landowners sign up over and over again we miss the folks who we need to be improving the conservation practices on their farms.

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We think that each state can adopt a suite of priority practices. The Commission has put together a great list. Virginia has already sort of focused on five key practices. And I think in each state geography you can focus on the key practices that we need to get on the ground in a much larger number and concentration. We also, as has been noted again, need to focus on geographic priorities. We have the targeting tools to do that in Sparrow model and others - to clearly tell us where we need to focus our priorities and initiative. And to the extent it's possible we need to do that.

I also believe we need to focus on accountability as well and look at an annual review of practices is implemented to make sure that we are getting the on the ground changes that we need. That we can look at practices under contract, practices completed to make sure that we are in a focused manner going about improving the natural water quality indicators. And as has been recognized by many others - those of us here today, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation included - who've been part of this discussion

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are happy to help in any way possible, whether that's at policy level or on the ground. Thank you.

MS: Thank you.

MS: Hello, my name's Scott Sickvohm. I'm up here to represent the Susquehanna Coalition. And for those of you who aren't familiar with the Coalition it's a group of soil and water conservation districts that make up the New York portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed, 16 conservation districts in all. We also include three in Pennsylvania, just north of Lawanda [ph]. I, myself, am the district manager of Montego [ph] County soil and water conservation district [unint] of the Susquehanna.

And I have to say that this is my first trip to this part of the country and it's great to see the Bay first hand.

(LAUGHTER) And it's nice to make the link in my mind.

It's something that I try very hard to promote in central New York is the connectivity between the river in our part of the state and what's happening right here. We've made a lot of hay with that connection and the Coalition has, it comes together for that reason.

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The Coalition is a group that's been very successful in getting funds from Federal agencies such as the EPA to develop our New York state tributary strategy, which will allow participation in the Chesapeake Bay program for New York state. We've had a lot of success with the targeted watershed grant promoting rotational grazing, road ditch restoration, low impact development and the like, and also done just a lot of [unint] work in wetland restoration.

I think the Coalition's point of view - what we are really looking forward to - is opening up I think perhaps a broader dialogue with our NRCS partners to look at things from the eight digit HUC I think that people have been mentioning. But I think that process would be done this morning with Mr. Brooks and I hope it will continue with Mr. Havarotti [ph].

My voice though as a district manager comes probably from very low down. I've tried to take the pulse of my colleagues and other district managers in New York to see what this new funding could mean to them and everybody who is absolutely excited to hear that it was being made

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available following some years I guess of budget declines. In New York the business model has had an impact on the way the conservation districts have been able to operate.

There's been a degree of withdrawal of services from the partnership and we're hoping that this will perhaps turn the tide. And we're certainly very thankful to our congressional leaders for making this part of the Farm Bill. One thing that came up in conversation with my colleagues was the need for, and it's been repeated frequently here today, was technical assistance. We are really where the rubber meets the road with outstanding [unint] it's going to be very difficult to engage farmers to make them understand and to get those BMPs installed.

This sentiment in New York is that the conservation districts can play a very good role in helping that happen and perhaps offer agreements that we've seen NRCS and those districts would be beneficial. Another thing that's come up frequently is the availability of engineering services. The districts are in a position now of making signs for BMPs but having nowhere to bring them to be approved or to

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have to engage the private sector which can be a very costly endeavor when you're trying to get these things done.

Also [unint] with the state's AEMA [ph] program would also be beneficial. They do a lot of things that are parallel to one another. And we think that they're complementary and [unint]. We will also be submitting written comments to Mr. Lawson, probably a fairly dense document, very specific.

But for those three things I'll just give you a general flavor and also by way of introduction to everybody there is a letter to let everybody know we are there and that we [unint]. Everything we do is for the benefit of the Bay and a large part of our success has been because of outreach and partnership. So I thank everybody for the attention and hope that [unint].

MS: Thank you.

Doug McKalip: I'd like to call forward Mr. Carl Brown with the Pennsylvania State Conservation Commission. And following Carl will be Mr. Russ Baxter, Virginia Department of

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Conservation and Recreation. If Mr. Brown is not present is Mr. Baxter present?

MS: Good morning. Greetings from Virginia. I'm pleased to be here to represent Secretary of Natural Resources President Brian [ph] as well as my agency which is the lead agency in Virginia for non-point source pollution. Obviously I join the other states and all of the folks here in welcoming this new Chesapeake Bay provision of the Farm Bill.

In Virginia we have taken great strides to meet our Chesapeake Bay water quality goals. As Governor Kaine reported last winter through a combination of grant and loan funding and innovative nutrient training program and strict regulations we're on track to meet our 2010 point source goals. Beginning in the administration of Governor Warner and now the Kaine administration we've committed more than a half billion dollars to point source upgrades and municipal sewage treatment plants. We are now shifting in our focus to non-point source programs, particularly agriculture.

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In 2006 the Virginia General Assembly [unint] further commitments to improving state waters through the passage of the Chesapeake Bay and Virginia Waters Cleanup Plan. This plan will serve as the State's strategies that are referenced in the Farm Bill. I would note that summaries and commentary on the Farm Bill set tributary strategies, but the language is the active state strategies.

Virginia's plan focuses on priority areas that include actions to address non-point source pollution, contributions from agricultural lands, in addition to many other areas. In the agricultural areas, as Ricky Rash and others have noted this morning we are focusing on five priority practices: nutrient management, cover crops, continuous no till and other conservation tillage, stream fencing and stream site buffer planning, wet area buffers as they're known in [unint].

In Virginia we have a strong and effective working relationship with the NRCS staff. I'm pleased that Jack Bricker and Ken Carter traveled up from Richmond here today, and also our 47 soil and water conservation

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districts that are ably represented by Ricky Rash. Because of these partnerships we're able to maximize both the NRCS EQIP funding and Virginia's agricultural BMP cost share program by ensuring that funds are most efficiently spent and that they complement each other.

Despite our progress the needed levels of implementation of just our priority practices remain significant; current projections to implement these BMPs at needed levels exceeds \$274 million of state dollars in the Chesapeake Bay watershed over the next six years. And once these practices are in place of maintaining these BMPs over time, it will require additional financial support.

We've been active in many other regions on the agricultural water quality front. We're using innovative marketing outreach tools to reach agricultural operators and promote the assistance of soil and water conservation districts. We sign memorandums of agreement with the six major poultry companies in Virginia, setting goals for phosphorus reductions through the use of, excuse me the use of [unint]

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in feed for cooperatively working with the industry to transport chicken litter.

And we're cooperating with other agricultural organizations and a unique coalition that has formed in Virginia to support non-point source funding, a coalition that includes both conservation organizations and agricultural organizations, a number up here today, the Bay Foundation, the Virginia Dairyman's Association, the Virginia Farm Bureau and the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Finally with the support of Governor Kaine we're finalizing the initiatives to further accelerate reductions from agriculture, in his capacity as the agricultural champion for the Chesapeake Executive Council, including consideration of more flexible standards for fencing that are currently provided for in CREP and enhanced cost sharing in impaired watersheds. We look forward to working with NRCS on these initiatives.

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In the time I have remaining, apparently two minutes, I'd like to just bring up five key points that we would like you to consider as implementation when the Farm Bill begins. First, that these state funds are provided to the states through existing USDA programs. In Virginia this means directing federal funds through EQIP. We recognize that other states may have other preferences, which USDA programs that best match their needs, for us it's EQIP.

Second is maximum flexibility must be provided to the states to use these and target these additional monies in ways that complement our ongoing efforts. In short, we need to minimize the red tape and allow each state to direct and target these monies in ways that complement our existing programs.

Thirdly we ask that the rules and requirements for the expenditure of these funds be resolved at an accelerated pace so that each state can be ready to make ultimate use of these monies when they are available. States must know the regulatory framework as soon as possible so the details

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of state implementation can be resolved in a timely fashion.

Fourth we ask that USDA ensure full state consultation and participation in the development of the environmental services standards under subtitle J of the conservation title. We are working actively on ecosystem service markets in Virginia and we need to be at the table when the federal government considers these same issues.

Finally, we would very cordially ask that USDA consider conducting listening sessions in each of the watershed states or at a minimum in the watersheds that have been designated for special consideration in the Bill. In Virginia that's the Shenandoah River and we would also expect to participate in any session related to the Potomac River.

We look forward to ensuring that these Farm Bill funds are effectively spent and we thank you very much for your participation here today and your ongoing participation in

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consultation with the states as this moves forward. Thanks very much.

MS: Thank you very much.

Doug McKalip: Next Mr. Brown from Pennsylvania Commission. And just by way of a status report I've got down on my list probably about 16 additional speakers, with the suggestion that you try to keep your comments to five minutes; you don't have to fill up the entire five minutes if you don't have that much material.

But after Mr. Brown we'll have Bernie Marczyk from Ducks Unlimited, Annapolis Office and also Mike Slattery with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation. By my count the number of speakers we have,, and the time we should truly be able to easily come in is by about 1 pm, even earlier than one. And if there are additional folks that did not register to speak, please come and see me, we'll make sure that you get on the list. Carl.

MS: Good morning. My name's Carl Brown, I'm Executive Secretary of the Pennsylvania State Conservation

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Commission. Our Commission's an 11 member body that's charged with the conservation of soil and water resources of Pennsylvania. Our Commission has a diverse membership with four partners, two public members, [unint] of agriculture, director of cooperative extension for Secretary of Agriculture, Dennis Wolff who you've heard from this morning and our Secretary of Environmental Protection as well as our NRCS state conservationist.

We enjoy a great working relationship with our NRCS staff and Greg Garrison in Pennsylvania. And Pennsylvania's very proud that their partnerships that they have and the conservation partnership of Pennsylvania. We work closely with our conservation districts in Pennsylvania. There are 66 districts throughout Pennsylvania of 528 volunteer district directors, including 500 professional staff, many of whom work in agriculture and conservation areas, in I think cooperation and partnership with NRCS through the county offices.

I will repeat a lot of what's been said this morning, but I do think that Congress got it right in formulating the

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Chesapeake Bay watershed program divisions. I think in a nutshell they said a couple of things. One is to keep it simple; two, use existing programs and mechanisms in distributing these funds; three, stay focused on watersheds and cost effectiveness; especially allow the states discretion to target problems and concerns. Four, allow the conservation partnership of each state to do what they do best, including conservation best management practices on the ground. And finally, five, make sure we ensure adequate technical assistance as available

As a Commission we fully agree with these basic principles and we encourage USDA to closely follow them in the development and implementation of these new programs. I think it's interesting we heard from congressmen this morning, but I think they said a number of things that are important. First, Congress recognized that we don't need additional studies. We need these BMPs on the ground.

Simply said it's not going to focus on putting these plans, these BMPs on the ground. And that's what NRCS and partnerships in the states do best. Congress recognized

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the need that we don't need new programs, we simply need to use existing programs, put these funds on the ground in a timely and efficient manner. In Pennsylvania we believe that the EQIP program is probably the best tool to be able to do that. But we also believe that there are other means that could be used through other NRCS programs.

Congress targeted specific rivers for initial consideration in distributing these funds. We believe that we need to target priority watersheds within our state in order to have the greatest level of success. It's been said numerous times we know where the problems are. We have the maps, we have the studies, we have the resources to tell us what the problems are. We need to allow these funds to flow through those programs to those targeted areas that the states prioritize to be able to get the best value for our buck.

We know the best management practices. Secretary Wolff in his comments made note of the priorities that we have in Pennsylvania. I won't reiterate those, but they are very similar to all the others that we've heard this morning in regards to priority practices that need [unint].

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I'll take the last couple of minutes here to talk about technical assistance. The Chesapeake Bay funding in Pennsylvania that's come through in this Farm Bill has the potential to increase the practices significantly. We truly appreciate that. But as it's been said repeatedly and it's worth repeating: you can't put those practices on the ground without technical assistance and without technical people.

The increases in technical dollars - financial dollars needs to increase technical assistance. You can't be effective putting those practices on the ground if you don't allocate those resources. Now we believe that with the increase of technical assistance funds each state conservationist should have discretions to adopt a strategy that utilizes these additional funds in a manner that best meets the technical service delivery needs in that particular state.

In Pennsylvania we believe strongly and we've invested in a membership technical assistance program that involves not

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only NRCS but the state agencies and conservation districts and private service, private sector technical service providers who think that each state is best prepared to be able to determine how to allocate those additional technical assistance service funds.

Pennsylvania has stepped up to the table. We've put about \$6.3 million last year into about 120 [unint] county conservation districts. A significant number of those are county district staffed. All those particular ones are ag related positions. And I think Pennsylvania as far as your conservation districts have tremendous capacity. As I said earlier we work closely with NRCS in those county offices and our districts are prepared, are ready as funds are available to step up and work hand in hand, side by side with NRCS and the counterparts in those offices to help put those practices on the ground.

So I'd like to thank you for the opportunity. I'd like to encourage you to as we said keep it simple, use existing programs, get [unint], give us the ability to help move this Bay ahead into [unint]. Thank you.

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Doug McKalip: Bernie Marczyk with Ducks Unlimited Capital Chapter, if we could ask Mike Slattery to come forward to the other microphone and be on deck for ... actually from the Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

MS: Good morning. My name's Bernie Marczyk, here on behalf of a million supporters of Ducks Unlimited across North America. Chief Lancaster and panel we appreciate you spending the time here today to come into this valuable program and the new funding coming into the Chesapeake Bay watershed. As you all know the Bay is a priority area for Ducks Unlimited as well for wintering waterfowl that venture down here every year from across the country and across North America.

We have focused our efforts here and partner very closely with NRCS and other federal partners around the country but also in the Bay watershed. And we look forward to continuing that opportunity to partner with these other organizations as well as federal government and state government partners.

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Ducks Unlimited has biological and technical expertise in the watershed to implement a lot of the programs that have been mentioned before me today. And I'll just very briefly summarize the three programs we like to focus on where we have worked with NRCS and we'd like to work in the future with NRCS with this new funding. We've submitted our written comments before, about a month ago, and we'll resubmit them again.

First is Wetland Reserve Program. We work around the country and this would be a great program for the Bay. As you all know wetlands are kidneys for the Bay to filter out the nutrients and sediment that come into the Bay watershed. Second, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program have varying buffers that are set up through this, [unint] are incredible filters as well for the nutrients and sediments coming into the Bay.

And finally Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program, WHIP, a complementary program to go with WRP into [unint]. We believe these funds can be spent very efficiently and effectively in a cost effective manner. And I'll close

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that Ducks Unlimited looks forward to the opportunity to continue our partnership with NRCS and all the work we do around the country and in the Bay watershed and we look forward to continuing that relationship in the future.

Thank you very much.

MS: Thank you.

MS: Good morning. My name's Mike Slattery of the Eastern Partnership Office, Director of the Fish and Wildlife Foundation. I'd like to thank the panel for taking the time to listen to us all here today. In particular I'd like to thank our friends at USDA and NRCS for the strong support and partnership that the foundation shares with the department and with the states. We are very grateful for the support that you've shown us.

We'll be submitting some written comments so I'm not going to delve in any detail what it is that we have to share with you, but I do want to point out one specific thing. The Foundation has recently undergone some formative change and is in the interest of targeting and leveraging measurement as we've all heard about from other partners here today, we're looking forward to really much more

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focused investments of our funds to very targeted natural resources conservation initiatives.

They're called our keystone initiatives and although we have had a long history of coordinating and supporting with other partners at the Chesapeake Bay recovery effort so it would sound a little bit odd for me to say this, but we are going to be focusing on a significant additional amount of investment in the Chesapeake Bay recovery effort through the Foundation's work, or we hope to.

We'll be taking to our board next month a keystone initiative concept that is going to be focused on several estuaries around the country. Because of our history here in the Chesapeake region, because of the investment that is being made here and because of the strength of the relationship we have here we're hoping that we'll be selecting the Chesapeake as the first focal area as a pilot for what we hope will be a model to take to other estuaries around the country.

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In that vein we have begun to discuss several specific elements, one of which may be of interest to others in the room today and to yourself, one of which is a market based approach, a nutrient trading approach that we would hope to play a fundamental role in building that would yield some success here in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and hopefully would be successful enough to apply in other estuaries that are in need of such assistance.

We've had some cursory discussions with some partners at the Walton Family Foundation and the Pac [ph] Foundation. And they have expressed a keen interest in a collaboration with us to invest with us and with our partners in the building of such a program that we'd all be very proud of. As I said those discussions are cursory.

But I point that out as a specific thing today because I think it represents a potential leveraging opportunity that could be very, very significant as we move forward with the investment of these Farm Bill funds that you so graciously help to direct in the name of conservation. With that I'll step aside and say thank you again for your time.

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Doug McKalip: I recognize a few farmers have come a long way this morning, as I know all of you have. Mr. John May of Rockingham County, beef and poultry farmer and also Mr. Mike Phillips of Rockingham County, beef farmer as well. Mr. May, if you can please come forward.

MS: Thank you for this opportunity. I'm John May, farmer, Shenandoah Valley. I was an early adopter of drought and clear storage facilities, EQIP program for watering and cross fencing and rotation of grazing our livestock. Went into the CREP program, we had a 100 acres of, approximately 100 acres of ground in the foresting area buffer programs. And most lately have gone into harden [ph] feeding areas and feeding sheds.

I would contend, although I'm a recipient of any financial benefits of these programs, that it's not the money that would solve the problems that are fundamental to the health of the Bay. But it would be investment in people that will change the environmental issues which affect the Bay. And what has happened is we have not been flexible enough with the programs. We need people who can have the dream of the end result we need to have. We have taken programs such as

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CREP and installed seven contracts and stopped before the eighth and ninth contract which we should have installed because there was a lack of flexibility.

We need to have people that have that local contact to work with farmers and carry this forward. As many speakers have said earlier there need to be the technical services that the people in the field have direct [unint]. Two of the conservationists that I admire throughout history would be Charlie Boyles [ph] who went into Southern Ohio in strip mine coal country and with very low tech, very basic environmental methods reclaimed the farm and turned it into a research station for Ohio State.

Another would be Louie Brahmfield [ph] who came back, a Pulitzer prize winning author, spending two decades in Europe and went to Hollowbart [ph] Farm in Pleasant Valley in Ohio as well, and took totally depleted soils and turned them around and made [unint] - conservationists even to this day. We do not need to reinvent the wheel. The programs that we need are already in existence. We need to add flexibility to them, we need to add compact of the

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basic services to the ground level. That report is the most important.

Twice in this calendar year our farm has been positively affected by the services of different agencies of the government. The most recent was a week ago, actually suffering from an issue probably resulting from accessory [ph] and we are very used to droughts. But we have corn that may be six feet tall and 18 inches tall standing side by side.

And there was a group of conservationists and government officials that came out and stood in that field and analyzed the situation and recognized the complexity of the situation and the results were not technical or far off expenditures of funds but went back to rotational crop philosophies, reduction of brescas [ph] being added to a cover crop, to all of these common basic principles of conservation [unint]. I will contend that it's these people with vision, these people that actually stand on the ground and interact with the farmers that make the difference in the success of those expenditures. (APPLAUSE)

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Doug McKalip: Okay, and we've got Mike. And also George Rohrer is here from Rockingham County. George will be next and then Wilmer Stoneman who's with the Virginia Farm Bureau.

MS: I want to thank you all for letting me come today and John, did you take mine, you said what I wanted to say. So I don't know if I'm going to say the same thing or not, but now I've got to go off the cuff a little bit. What I wanted to talk about a little bit is a little bit different than what John said.

My wife and I sit on the farm, both my grandfathers on my mom's side and my father's side and my great grandfather's farm. And there's no one in the country that loves American agriculture as much as I. They may equal me, but not greater than, because it's a great passion. And I have to warn you all that you said five minutes was all you were going to allow me, well, folks that know me know I can't even say my name in five minutes, because I can talk the ear of a stalk of corn, especially when something is very passionate to me.

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So I'm going to talk a little bit about some of the things that I see as a farmer and I see that we need to concentrate on other than what John has already alluded to, he stole part of my things. But the one thing I haven't heard talked about much today is preservation farmland. We got to figure out some way we can preserve this farmland, because folks what we're looking at here, you talk about farmland, our farm homeland security.

Just think how strong America agriculture is to our nation. In other words militaries can't function without us providing them food. We are the backbone of the nation. And I think that message needs to be sent out and how we're going to go about doing it. I'm sorry, I'm going kind of off the cuff, but that's one of the things that kind of stuck in my mind the most. And the other thing is I will keep it even briefer than I anticipated, but there is one thing that I've heard time and time and time again today about technical assistance, how important it is.

And I want to add to that a little bit, you want people that are knowledgeable and well trained in that field. And

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you got them out there and I've been around that. And I'm going to speak on experience. It cost you all a dime of what that experience you all paid a gentleman 31 years ago in September when a young man about 17 years old plowed [unint].

And when that technician came out to the fields to talk with that young man that was trying to get started farming, he talked to him about how that fields are being eroded and the young man said to him I cannot see erosion, I don't see it. And he pulled out a dime, 31 years ago, come September, and he said you see that that is five tons an acre. From that example, from that technician, 31 years ago, that young man looked at it and started scratching his head and looking more closer - a little more closer.

And how many people do you think that young man has touched and talked to and tried to educate as well from 31 years ago [unint]? You're looking at that young man today.

Fifteen years I'm doing continuous no till. But it came from the thickness of a dime, standing on a hillside, not 15 feet of where we were standing that day.

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I'm sorry I kind of went off the cuff, but I think what we need to look at, let's go back to that technician, we need those technicians in the field, good, well trained. But most importantly look at upper brass people here, forgive me for saying this because I'm going to tell you what I feel, you got to listen to those technicians. They are your ears and eyes out there; they see. And do not squash their creativity of what they can come up with; that creativity likes flexible programs.

You need to sit and listen to the folks. There are ways we can do things and make that program more flexible to fit the need of the farmer. And on that note I'm going to say goodbye and thanks again for having me. (APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: George Rohrer with Rockingham County, poultry and dairy farmer and then Wilmer from the Virginia Farm Bureau.

MS: George, just before you start let me thank Assistant Secretary Rutherford for coming today. I know he's got to get back. I hope when you go back and meet with the

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Secretary and sub Cabinet you let him know what a large crowd we had and how passionate folks were about this issue. And so we again appreciate you coming today.

Boyd Rutherford: Absolutely. Thank you.

MS: Good morning. I am a dairy and poultry farmer from Rockingham County, Virginia, in part of the Shenandoah Valley, part of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. I rode with John and Mike and they really have done a good job of covering things. I guess I can take my comments, we were all thinking along the same lines, but a few thoughts I had as we look at the best way to get the most for these conservation dollars in our area. I believe that livestock exclusion from streams is probably of the utmost importance. I also believe that assisting in nutrient management planning and supporting that with dollars is extremely important.

In both of these instances, as Mike said, flexibility in my opinion is key. What works on somebody else's farm may not work on mine. Each farm is unique, depending on the operation and the geographical conditions, and we need to

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have flexibility if we're going to have people participate. There's been much made of technical support here this morning. Again, that's of utmost importance, but it's giving, as Michael alluded to, it's giving the people on the ground time, good relationships, making use of their expertise, but also giving them the flexibility to change.

I realize there needs to be some wide overall set of regulations that we operate by. These people on the ground need to have the flexibility to tailor programs to a specific situation to an individual farm. And if we're going to be as successful as we can be, and that we need to be, that's going to be very important.

I think another thing, the programs that we look at need, we need to look at how they affect farmer's bottom line; everything we do in agriculture we have to look at from that perspective. Is it going to be negative, is it going to be positive, is it going to be neutral. We certainly cannot afford a negative effect to our bottom line. We would prefer that it not be neutral, but you know sometimes that may have to be the case. But certainly that long term

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is a large consideration. And that's my comments. Thank you.

MS: Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

MS: Chief Lancaster, members of the panel: my name is Wilmer Stoneman. I represent the 38,000 producer members of Virginia Farm Bureau. And you've heard a good number of presentations today from Virginia, especially the last three or four actual Virginia farmers. You've also heard from our President of our Soil and Water Conservation District Directors and a number of other Virginians. And I've rewritten my comments four or five times, but I'm going to try to make it as brief as I can.

I want to steal a comment or quote from one of our environmental agency staff. What we're about in order to change water quality in the Chesapeake Bay: it's got to be everybody, everywhere, all the time. We can target too much. We can prioritize too much. We can make standards too stiff. We can be slow in application. And we can be concerned about equitable distribution.

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We tend to believe that special consideration for the watersheds says yes, pay attention to them, but don't forget about the other farmers, especially those in Virginia, and I've got one or two that are probably going to speak here in a few minutes, that can see the Bay, that can touch the Bay, that have an affect on the Bay, but aren't in that particular watershed. And so when the funds are distributed, yes, pay special, give special consideration to that watershed that happens to affect Virginia, but keep in mind that there are other farmers out there, there are other technical assistance staff people out there that may be underused that could implement a good number of, a good bit of these particular dollars.

I want to touch on market based solutions. Market based solutions are wonderful things. But in certain cases they're not ready for prime time yet. We think you ought to stick to the practices and programs that we've identified here today, especially nutrient management, cover crops, conservation tillage, stream fencing and buffers. Those are five practices that you've heard about

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on and on and on today. Those are practices that we can implement today.

Our interpretation of Congress's wishes was to do something today. We're part of a coalition in Virginia that Ann and Ricky Rash and others have mentioned and we're trying to find stable sources of funding in order to make an improvement, a marked improvement which gets us back to everywhere, everybody, everywhere, all the time. We've got to find the practices, and we believe those five are the ones that can make the Bay, make a change in the Bay.

Flexible standards are certainly important. You've heard from the folks from Virginia, we're going to beat that drum to death. But also empower farmers. Farmers can do nutrient management plans. With the right information and the right tools empower them to write those plans, so that you have a relief on technical assistance.

And last, but not least, I can't leave the podium or the stand without talking about farmland preservation.

Farmland or farming has been said at least once in here

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today is the number one BMP for water quality in the Chesapeake Bay, just by farming it and not developing. Putting in trees, putting in farm production is the best VMP for the farm. So keep in mind we've talked a lot about BMP today, but also remember farmland preservation. Thank you.

Doug McKalip: I may mispronounce his name and I apologize, we'd like to have Gary Lantz with Cannon Hill Farms [ph] come forward. Cannon Hill Farms is not identified with a state name. I guess we'll learn about that when Mr. Lantz comes forward. And then Jim Baird with American Farmland Trust will be next. Mr. Lantz.

MS: Good morning. My name is Gary Lantz and I'm from Shenandoah County. And Cannon Hill Farm is a family farming operation consisting of 272 certified organic acres. The farm is located just west of Interstate 81 at Mount Jackson, exit 273. Shenandoah County ranks fifth in the state in agriculture and farming is the number one industry in Shenandoah County next to tourism.

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We are in our fifth year of being certified organic and our eighth year of being herbicide, pesticide and synthetic fertilizer free. We are on Virginia's short list of farms that has control of its animals from conception to consumption. We raise Belted Galloway [ph] cattle: better known as the Oreo cow. We also have [unint] and Angus cattle and Tamworth hogs. Our crops include alfalfa hay, grass hay, corn, soy beans, wheat with Austrian winter feed, strain and porridge [unint], oats and barley.

These crops are used to feed the cattle and hogs which we direct market on a contractual basis to organic butcher shops and restaurants and as our supply permits - to individuals. Farming practices that we use at the farm include [unint] or strip farming, cover crop and crop rotation. Organic farming [unint] the use of herbicides, pesticides or synthetic fertilizers, products which have contributed, shown their problems to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Organic farming utilized the basic premise of agriculture.

Feed the soil and let the soil feed the plants. Excuse me,

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but I've had, like everybody else, had to rewrite these things. Here are some ways I believe that the NRCS can assist organic farming as well as conventional farming. And I think the number one item would be education. If we don't educate our young people starting in the preschools and right on up through school - believe it or not in Shenandoah County FFA has been taken out of a lot of the schools. Four H programs need to be enhanced.

People need to understand that without agriculture we don't exist. Without agriculture the Bay would not exist. And if you don't educate the children and start at the grassroots then we've lost the battle. Just think about the education. Children today recognize the golden arches as the number one symbol in this country. Now if we can take that and make farming the number one recognizable symbol in this country and the importance of farming, and I think we've done a tremendous step in preserving farmland, we've done a tremendous step in preserving the Bay.

I think we need technical assistance. Farmers need to have workshops and explain the benefits of organic farming. We

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need to remove the stigmatism and the misconceptions about organic farming. We are no longer a group of hippies living in a commune. (LAUGHTER) We need to explain the farming techniques associated with organic farming, strip farming, weed control, soil preservation, crop rotation and crop production, thoughtful crop operations in lieu of farms and concentrate on one crop.

We need diversity in our farmlands. We need to explain to farmers about the three year transitional period from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture. We need to explain to them that yes they can do it. Yes, you can farm organically for a profit. One great benefit to organic farming is the farmer gets to set his price and negotiate his price with the restaurants, the butcher shops based on his input costs. How many conventional farmers get to negotiate the price that they receive for their product? Not very many; they take their cattle to the stockyard. Two bidders determine the value of that cow. They take their crop to the grain elevator. That grain elevator determines what they're paid for that grain. But

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if you can negotiate your price you have a lot better chance of becoming profitable.

Cost sharing. It's very expensive to be certified organic. It costs me for the 272 acres about \$750 a year to be certified. We have to pay all the expenses associated with certification. We pay the inspector. We pay all these expenses for that inspector to get to our farm. We need cost share to help with the covered feed areas. All of our animals on our farm are encouraged to come into barns where we feed them under cover, because we need the fertilizer that these animals generate to turn into compost.

We need to teach farmers that yes they can compost. It turns organic matter that your soil needs. And there's equipment that could be cost shared like compost turners and things to make life a whole lot easier and quicker on the farm. Right now we're using loaders to turn our compost.

There are so many things I'd like to go on, but in conclusion certified organic farming is not for everyone,

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nor is it the silver bullet that will cure all the ails of the Chesapeake Bay. I can, however, see many benefits that will be derived from the promotion of certified organic farming in principles and practices. In this respect I strongly suggest that existing program changes occur that monetarily compensate present and future certified organic farming operations. Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: Jim Baird with AFT and then two Nottingham's on the registry. We have the Association of Potato and Vegetable Growers, that's Butch Nottingham and the second one, I apologize, I cannot read the first name, but representing ESW. So please be cued up for a Mr. Baird.

MS: Thanks very much. Jim Baird, the American Farmland Trust. I'm a Mid Atlantic States Director. I commend you and I thank you for this listening session. I believe from our ... we have the distinction of being the only listening session in the country in the Farm Bill. And I'm glad to see the turnout that's here. So I really appreciate it. Again, like everyone else I'm flip flopping, an awful lot of congruence in what people are saying.

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I guess one of the things that I have a little bit of a different vantage point like some people here because I have a regional eye; I spend a lot of time going between [unint] and I'm in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Maryland and I'm in Delaware as well. I think one of the things that impresses me most is the level of dialogue, the level of partnership and although I don't always agree on everything all the time, across states, across organizations, things like that, there is an awful lot to build on here in terms of the things we do agree on. And I would recommend that this program do its utmost to use that resource.

One of the things I think the guiding principle here, this is a special program. It needs to be treated as a special program. The things that really make it special are some that have been mentioned already. First of all, this is additional funding. We've got unprecedented levels of conservation funding in the overall Title Two conservation title. That money is there. This is for, to do special work above the norm.

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We really believe that NRCS should develop a notice of funding availability. The rules are there. You could get the process done quickly and efficiently by issuing a NOFA. We do feel that targeting is important geographically, certainly in the sub watershed level. And also in terms of practices we do feel that the state conservationists with the help of their committees could decide for each state a fairly limited number of practices to be focused on, really they should take the direction on cost effectiveness.

I think this is the key. \$188 million is great. It's still not a lot of money. It needs to be very cost effective in working in the places and with the practices that are going to get the most attainment of the Chesapeake Bay goal that we can. Various people have mentioned reports about technical assistance. I think also marketing and outreach; I was interested in the comments from Virginia about really innovative ways of marketing.

I guess what I think is most important is we need to be thinking about scaling up here. Technical assistance is very important, but what we really need is to think about

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how do we go to the thousands level and tens of thousands of acres of farmers and be planning that from the beginning. It's one thing to think about technical assistance about how we're going to do each visit and how we're going to get each farmer in the door, but really how are we going to pull this thing together and make large scale impact.

And that I would come back to the idea of partnerships. In terms of technical assistance there needs to be special attention paid. I would really encourage, AFT would really encourage the state conservationists, the technical committees to submit written plans to the Chief about how they're going to enhance these endeavors, technical assistance, marketing, and to use innovative methods. And I think that would come back to my theme of partnership.

The Chesapeake Bay region has got to be one of the most blessed areas of the world in terms of expertise, in terms of people who do get the fundamentals, both citizens and organizations and elected officials. Let's use those partnerships. So let's get the technical assistance out on

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the ground with cooperative agreements with organizations with certainly more NRCS staff leveraging what we can.

Thanks very much.

MS: Thank you.

MS: My name is Butch Nottingham and I represent the Association of Potato and Vegetable Growers, an organization that represents about 80 percent of the vegetables in the state of Virginia. Our Board of Directors would like to voice our strong support for continued and increased funding around more resources under the EQIP program. Our two counties, the south tip of Delmarva Peninsula, produce 80 percent of the state's vegetable crops. This production relies on irrigation from ground well resources; their designated sole source of [unint].

In recent years we have seen funding to enlarge surface water storage in lieu of pumping from the area's [unint] and upgrading the efficiency on existing irrigation delivery systems. We feel that the funding projects represent only the initial interest in those types of conservation efforts. We also support efforts to target

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projects to local needs that are specific. Therefore, we are hoping to see expanded programs to invest this critical resource concern.

We would further like to participate in future discussions as specific program criteria is reviewed and updated for successful implementation. We'll submit a letter with more details, but we certainly appreciate the opportunity to address you folks and appreciate your perspective.

MS: Thank you very much.

MS: I want to thank you for the opportunity to be here to talk to you today. Can you hear me?

MS: Yes, sir.

MS: I'm Addison Nottingham. I'm a farmer on the Eastern Shore Virginia and I also work on the Eastern Shore Soil and [unint] Conservation District. One thing that I think would be important is to maintain the partnership between the Soil and Water District and the NRCS. There's always been a strong bond between those two organizations. And I think NRCS benefits from the expertise and support of the Soil and Water District.

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And it's been, land owners like to deal with folks on a local level, people that they know and by having a consistent relationship between the two organizations it makes it a lot easier for our farmer to come in and sit down and talk to a conservationist about what his plans are or to go out on his farm and make farm visits. And we all feel very comfortable with you being there.

Virginia has a large percentage of its agricultural land in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and it's important that we get the funds in accordance to what area that we serve. As long as it's done fairly between all the different NRCS regions in the partnership states it works fine. And you've done a good job so far. The NRCS staff need to have enough staff at the time to implement all this new money, all these new programs, program money that's going to come in.

In a lot of cases they are short of staff already. And the funding has been probably a little less than what they really need in order to get the job done. And I'll

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encourage you all to look at that at the staff and funding levels for them. It's also the fact that when you don't have enough staff a farmer comes in or a landowner comes in to have something done to participate in a program and it can't be done in a timely manner.

A lot of times we lose those folks; they go out and do something different on their own and sometimes they just don't know the best way to go about doing it. So NRCS certainly has good training and good people to help lead in that process of working with growers. They just need more people to do it. As I say long term relationship with landowners, farmers is a great thing to have. You need to have people in place. All conservation is local. And we need to remember that. We need to treat all conservation as local - local priorities. And that's about all I got to say. And I thank you.

MS: Thank you.

Doug McKalip: Will Bob Summers from the Maryland Department of Environment come forward, followed by Tom Simpson with the Water Stewardship Incorporated. And then George Wolff from the Pennsylvania Grange. I know George is the very first

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person to come in this morning and George if you could be on deck for us as well. So Bob Summers, Maryland Department of Environment, Tom Simpson, Water Stewardship Incorporated.

MS: Thank you. I am Tom Simpson and for my friends in the room and friends on the panel, yes, I'm with Water Stewardship Incorporated for two weeks now, I'm no longer with the University of Maryland. We are a new non-profit that is working some major food system corporations to look at opportunities to incorporate water stewardship throughout the food system. I'll explain more as I move along.

But first I want to thank you for your quick hard work to get all of the Farm Bill implemented so rapidly, but specifically the work that you're doing here on the Chesapeake Bay effort and given the task that you're facing thanks so much for taking time to come and listen. I support what many said in front of me that we do have a good delivery system in place and I think we need to continue that delivery system. I think we need to supplement that delivery system. And I'm going to talk some about that.

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I do think that much of the new funding and the funding since it's a Bay watershed was to provide us opportunities for innovation and to try new approaches that can set us up for the expansion of conservation that we all know we'll be facing not only in the Bay perhaps as our model or pilot but throughout the Mississippi River basin as well. What our non-profit will be doing is working with food system corporations, our two current public partners are Cisco and General Mills.

We anticipate announcing another three to five within the next month. We are beginning to meet with large suppliers such as Tyson's and Purdue. And we also are scheduling meetings with ag organizations, and for my friends in the audience we're starting in Virginia because Governor Kaine is very interested in this and he is the Bay ag champion. So though I live in Maryland I'm a Virginia native and we are heading south to start our work working with the folks there.

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We will serve by third party professionals to do assessments of farm operations at the farmer's discretion. Is the farmer joining the program? But if they grow for certain suppliers they will be encouraged to participate. These assessments will set a baseline of conservation which we anticipate being basic nutrient management, basic erosion control and basic animal waste management.

The certified professional will then work cooperatively with the farmer to develop a five to seven year continuous improvement plan that allows for slow incremental improvement. It's hard to jump from where you are over a high bar, but if we could each take a step then we can move forward a little bit at a time. And so our approach is on a continuous improvement program. The reason I'm here to talk is not just to tell you about what we're going to be doing but to say that we hope that the farmers who participate in our program will have access to cost share funding through this program.

We hope where our continuous improvement plans constitute the equivalent of contents of nutrient management plan that

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they would be eligible for incentives that are offered frequently, I know that in Maryland for a [unint] to implement a CNMP. And we hope that as we grow and improve ourselves that indeed you would look to provide some priority for farmers interested in signing up for one of our continuous improvement plans.

One thing I failed to mention earlier because I know it's a Chesapeake Bay session, but with the Chief here I wanted to point out that we do have pilot programs that we'll start in Northwest Arkansas and South Central Minnesota in the valley of the Jolly Green Giant in case you're wondering with General Mills. We really appreciate you coming to listen and we appreciate this opportunity. I would like to continue to work with you. I'm talking with your state conservationists, I've talked with Dick as we develop our program so that we can take what I'm terming a market driven program and let it be one tool to help us expand our conservation efforts. Thank you.

MS: George Wolff, Pennsylvania State Grange, and then followed by Bob Thomas, Pennsylvania Game Commission and Diane Kearns, Fruit Hill Orchard.

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MS: I'm George Wolff here today representing the Pennsylvania State Grange. First of all I want to thank Congress for passing the 2008 Farm Bill and including the opportunity and funding for using the Chesapeake Bay area as a pilot program to explore the most beneficial and cost effective methods of improving waters of the Bay and tributaries and rivers going into the Bay.

Pennsylvania State Grange has been on the forefront of conservation [unint] and mining issues for many, many years. We've consistently worked with the key departments of agriculture, NRCS, environment protection agencies, state conservation commissions and all of our companion farm organizations to promote new techniques and opportunities to improve soil and water conservation and reduce the loss of nutrients from our land.

We feel that it's important to preserve the land. And it's bloody well important to preserve the farmer - and the economics are the thing that do that. We therefore want to thank you for the opportunity to be here before you today and present to you some thoughts. First, it's vitally

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important to keep cover on the land, thus reducing soil erosion and at the same time holding, stabilizing the nutrients in the soil, reducing [unint] and loss due to water solubility.

We believe that there is a great need to fund the development of conservation and nutrient management plans for land owners. We remind you that conservation districts have the confidence of land owners but need extra staffing and their efforts combined with private contractors also need funding are the developers of the soil and nutrient management plans. This also requires funding to help the land owner install the practices that are recommended.

We believe that soil, feed and manure tests are an absolute necessity since soil tests are the basis of correct application of nutrients for the growing crop. Feed tests should be the basis for balanced nutritional feeding programs for the animals. And manure tests tell the nutrients that are actually in the manure. All three interrelate with one another and therefore we believe these tests should be required on a regular well thought out

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interval and that funding should be available for producers to help cover this expense.

Manure is not a well balanced source of nutrients and when the phosphorus level in the soil is already high, manure likely should not be applied. Therefore there needs to be funding to help the producer purchase nitrogen that would not now be available from the manure and also needs to be funding to help the [unint] of the manure in other fashions, which would not be allowed as the soil amendment in the future.

It's frankly amazing how many farmers today do not use soil tests or forage tests, therefore they have no compass telling them where they are or where they're going. New techniques and practices should be required. One of these practices is precision farming, which utilizes yield monitors on the harvesting equipment which indicate where their low yield levels are in the field which will require special soil tests and then the use of the computerized fertilizer spreading equipment that will be able to apply the nitrogen, phosphorous and pot ash at varying levels in

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different parts of the field as indicated from those soil tests.

This would reduce the loss of nutrients because they won't be applying extra nutrients where they're not needed and will apply those where they're short. The techniques reduce the loss of nutrients and balances the nutrients across the field and also increases yields and hopefully profitability.

Agriculture's greatly reduced soil loss due to the increased use of no till and generally improve conservation practices. However, new knowledge has recently been uncovered indicating the movement of legacy sediment trapped behind abandoned mill ponds, which generations ago provided the energy for saw mills, feed and flour mills and wool mills. And it's suspected to be a large and direct contributor of sediment to the Bay along with the nutrients attached to that sediment.

We believe that further investigation and effort to manage this previously unknown source of contaminates should be

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investigated and efforts to manage those contributions be established and funded. The USDA, the USGS report in the past indicated that they thought that as much as 80 percent of the sediment to the Bay was coming from legacy sediment. So we can put a lot of practices back on the land and still not achieve that much.

Thank you again on behalf of the Pennsylvania State Grange for allowing us to voice our concerns and needs. As I have stated, they're funding for no till and cover crops, funding and requiring soil manure tests, funding the use of precision agriculture and funding should also be available to purchase nitrogen and pot ash needed to balance soil needs.

Funding should be also provided to dispose of excess manure and handling. And funding should be provided to handling and stabilizing legacy sediment. In the interest of time we did not go into depth on these, but we'd be prepared to do so if you'd like in the future.

MS: Thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

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MS: My name is Bob Thomas. I'm a Farm Bill Outreach Coordinator for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. I'd like to talk about the enhancement of the restoration habitat portion of the Chesapeake Bay watershed program. We would like to ask that the state wildlife and fishery agencies are involved in the crafting and planning [unint] for the state technical committee.

We also recommend that the [unint] best management practices reflect sound stewardship of soil, water and wildlife habitats and that the Chesapeake Bay watershed program will have the ability to benefit the species of conservation concerned in the Chesapeake Bay counties that identify the state wildlife action plan. And these BMPs will prioritize native cool and warm season grasses and native vegetative buffers where appropriate.

And finally I'd like to recommend that you develop incentives that will increase the likelihood of success in restoring wildlife habitat to the Chesapeake Bay drainage [ph].

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FS: Hi, my name is Diane Kearns and I'm with the Fruit Hill Orchard which is about a 3,000 acre, mostly apple operation in the Winchester/Frederick County, Virginia area. I'm sort of [unint] generation farmer, all on the same land and really view ourselves as stewards of the land; we're just here using it for a bit. And from that point of view that leads me to look to the big picture of a long term approach to these kinds of things.

The goal that we had here is huge; I mean, it's lofty, it's very complex as far as getting there. And one of the things I think is really important as we take on something that big is communication. So I really applaud this session here today, where you're listening to folks like me that come to give you input. But I think it's very important too that all up and down the ladder, that lines of communication stay very open, from the field man all the way up to the top. And it would all be affiliated organizations that you're hearing from too. It's super important to have that happen.

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Another thing I feel is very important is monitoring. My background, I have a science education background. And in that I was taught that basically good science methodology, you get a hypothesis, experiment and results and the result go to back to your hypothesis. So it's really important to have some level of meaningful and realistic monitoring to these programs that you have so you can understand what you're doing. I realize how difficult that can be given cost constraints, but that's important, that's part of good methodology.

And then some observations that I had from the apple grower side of things is staffing. The NRCS staff is great in this area. They're doing a super job, but there's just not enough of them. I mean, I feel like there's probably programs out there, BMPs, that we might be able to utilize but we're just not aware of, because we're too busy making a living to do all the research on that, you know, they're too busy doing the other things that they're doing. So I think staffing and technical support is very important to implement the good programs that you have there.

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Another thing that is an observation that happened to us about four or five years ago, we took some trees out of the ground because the apple industry is not quite as economically fruitful as it has been in the past and as a result we had some ground we were trying to establish whether to put some [unint] on it.

Well, the question came up what's the heavy metal content of this stuff? And for whatever reason we found it really difficult to decide, we couldn't figure that out. So to a degree we were making a decision in a vacuum on that one. And I think that we probably could have done better on that but just didn't quite know where to turn to or how to make that happen.

Another thing that I'm involved in is conservation easements. Our county has a local authority which I'm part of and one of the things that came to my mind again when I began thinking about this I have not heard too much talk about laying (unint) easements that are applicable to like nutrient management programs and things like that. So I'm wondering if there couldn't be some way of strengthening

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that or at least making it aware to more people that that kind of stuff could be written into the deed perhaps.

[unint].

And I guess to just sort of conclude I'd like to say that as you're going to this lofty goal, I really feel like you would have to have a holistic approach on the whole thing. The approach needs to be flexible on a local level because it is so big. You're going to have that flexibility to move around a bit. It's also going to have to be sustainable. But most of all I really think it's super important that you make as many folks as possible aware of what those issues, what the issues are and then at the same time the programs that you have in place you have to introduce them to that, because I honestly believe that a lot of folks want to do something but they're just not quite sure what to do. Thank you very much for listening.

(APPLAUSE)

Doug McKalip: Can we get Dean Cumbia with the Virginia Department of Forestry to please come forward and after Dean will be Bill Angstadt.

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MS: Thanks very much for your attention and as we get toward to close your attention and your patience. I'm Dean Cumbia, I'm the Director of Forest Management with the Virginia Department of Forestry in Charlottesville. Virginia as well as the other Bay states have rich and bountiful forest resources. In fact, over 60 percent of Virginia is forest, with 16 million acres, a little more than that. The majority of it is owned by private landowners, several hundred thousand landowners, some of them are small, many are farmers as well or are associated with farming operations.

These forests provide multiple benefits to the landowners as well as to society in general. These include traditional, which include the production of forest products, but as we are well aware forests are one of our best conservers of water, as well as producers of clean air. Now we are very interested in storing carbon as well as using forests for biomass and energy production.

One of those critical issues of Virginia's forestry is conserving the forest land base of Virginia. In Virginia

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we lose approximately 30,000 acres each year of our forest land to other uses that are permanently diverted.

Sustaining the benefits from forests is dependent upon a stable forest land base. Private landowners face increasing competition for their land from other usage. And it's very important for these forests as well as farms to remain viable, particularly from an economic standpoint.

The Farm Bill provides incentives for long term management, both for forests and for farms. It's important to utilize the Farm Bill programs to conserve and to enhance working forests. Specifically in Virginia we're privileged to have good working relationships that have developed over the years with our state and local NRCS, FSA, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Virginia farmer and conservationist, and recreation as well. We've all found that by working cooperatively we can accomplish effective conservation.

Specifically in this Farm Bill items that are important for forest and landowners include the EQIP program, and this Farm Bill recognizes the importance of forests for

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conservation and for production, CREP and CRP, which have been and continue to be very effective in protecting water quality and providing many other benefits, and additionally the inclusion of forest in some of the land conservation programs, specifically the Farm Land Protection program and some of the other programs.

In summary, [unint] provides many benefits and provide many of the answers to protecting the waters of the Chesapeake Bay. Private forest landowners are the key. Forest management keeping these lands productive is essential. Thank you and appreciate you're listening.

MS: Bill Angstadt, Delaware Maryland Agri Business Association, the DMAA or the business [unint] in Maryland and Delaware that partner with the farmers to execute fuel specific crop management for a bountiful and safe food supply. So I'm a business person. I thought the way we were going we were just going to hear from government all morning. There's another perspective here.

One of the things I want to point out is state technical committees. State technical committees in Maryland and

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Delaware were the true foundation for our success in Maryland and Delaware. And one of the reasons is it's not just government voices being heard. It's not just the NRCS but the state conservation districts, the Department of Ag, there are state agencies, there are commodity groups, there's farmers, there's certified crop advisors, there's ag business.

So it's the one place in NRCS that the locally driven conservation is open, is transparent, collaborations are built, where consensus can be achieved. So I would urge you to keep the state technical committees as the focal point for this new Chesapeake Bay watershed money.

It was very educational today. Ann Swanson talked about we need quick solutions; we need this as additional funding. Senator Cardin's staff talked about the purpose of Congress. Congress didn't appropriate this money to be, if Congress would have wanted this money to be in an operations account it would have put it there. If they would have wanted it to be block grants to states they would have put it there.

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If they wanted this to be more money for EQIP and CSP they would put it there. They didn't put it there. We have a chance to take a different approach. And I hear so many voices here today saying everything's fine, let's stay on course, let's just use this money to do what we're already doing.

I have a very different view point, because even though NRCS and the soil conservation districts have wonderful tools, they're not the only tools in the toolbox. There's a whole array of precision agriculture tools, of tools on increasing yields, on increasing land intensification to get higher yields on good farm land and keep the fragile land in conservation practices instead of plowing it up.

So I would suggest, Dick, that maybe we should say take five million dollars and allocate each state to have a state technical committee advise the state cons on if we give you five million dollars in this new program - how are you going to use it? And let the state technical committee

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come up with those solutions to real problems that are on the ground today, so equity in targeting.

For example, we talked to, in the Maryland Governor's pesticide advisory, Dr. Clifford Mitchell with Public Health about intervention, identifying micro-ecologies that have a problem and let's intervene with solutions. So this kind of surgical strikes the state technical committees have the ability to do. And to give you an example, two weeks ago the state technical committees of Maryland and Delaware and the Equip subcommittee met jointly, both staff, university, extension, CCAs, agri business, commodity groups, unprecedented.

And we used EPA, Chesapeake Bay offices, priority watersheds to look at what are the real problems in which 12 digit HUC watershed codes, okay? And is it phosphorus, is it nitrogen, is it sediment? And how do we now surgically strike these issues and intervene?

Thirdly, one of the tools in our toolbox as I say is yield, crop production. If a farmer can't make money,

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conservation is irrelevant. It's not sustainable. So the only conservation, particularly annual conservation that can long-term sustain profits for the farmer, a farmer is going to keep doing.

So in looking at total systems, for example, in the technical note from Precision Ag that came in last year, from Agronomy, whole systems, not individual, not do this barrier, do this, but the entire system of a farm has to be looked at. Prevention of nutrients is much more cost effective than mitigation of nutrients. If you don't put on excess nutrients to begin with, you don't have to stop them from getting to the Bay.

And so that's a tool again on the ag business side, from the crop consultant side of prevention of nutrients that really soil conservation districts don't have that tool in their toolbox. And to give you one final example is the Conservation Innovation Grant. That program has not done well aligning with the state technical committees. There's no state technical committee review, there's no technical

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review by NRCS staff at the state level, no sign off by the state con.

And so much of those dollars are sent in directions that are not aligned with the priorities of state technical committees at all. So I would hope that you don't take these funds and put them into that kind of misalignment outside the state technical committees. So thank you very much.

Doug McKalip: By my count we have six additional speakers, a few of you have asked to be added, so we've added you and a couple have been taken off since they have views that have been expressed by other speakers. But we have six additional. Dale Gardner of Virginia State Dairymen, if you can please come forward; Larry Kehl, Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts and then Dick Marzolf with the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District in Virginia.

MS: Good afternoon. Dale Gardner, Virginia State Dairymen's Association. I represent all the dairy farmers in the state of Virginia, about 60 percent are at or around the Chesapeake Bay watershed. One of the bright spots we felt

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with the Farm Bill was conservation money that was in the Farm Bill. Virginia, unlike a lot of the small, a lot of the Bay states you're not going to get a lot of money from the subsidy programs, monitoring programs. So we look at conservation money as an opportunity.

And I think we need to promote conservation as an opportunity not just a cost. And the gentleman before me talked about it doesn't make sense for a farmer economically, he's not going to implement these practices, so we really need to focus on the economics of conservation because if a farmer knows that it will work for him economically you won't have to beg him, he'll do it.

Several years ago - you don't have to go back too many - you had to really talk to farmers about doing conservation. You don't have to talk to them about it; they know conservation is a good thing. It's how they go about doing it, how do they have the money to do it. We need a few things. First of all, in Virginia we need our fair share. We felt for a number of years that we haven't always gotten the amount of money that we should in relation to the

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concentration of animal numbers and nutrients that we have, particularly in the Shenandoah.

We need greater flexibility for state programs and flexibility for states to implement these programs. For the greatest and I agree with the gentleman right before me, I think I'm a strong believer in a total systems approach. Individual BMPs are good and they're beneficial, but I think to get the greatest benefits from the resources that we're spending we need to look at a total systems approach.

But in order to do that we have got to have more technical assistance. And we've heard this time and time and time again today. There are a lot of things hanging out there that farmers know about, a lot of different programs, but quite frankly I think a lot of them are confused. And we all know what happens when people get confused, oftentimes they don't do anything. So that technical assistance is very important.

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If I have a chance I know in Virginia we're making a strong push for stream fencing and nutrient management plans. In order to get buy in for that you really need to look at your rulemaking and see if there can't be more flexibility in those setbacks for stream fencing. We have people that will not enter a federal program but they'll do poly wire ten feet from the stream, which shows that they'll do it, but the 35 foot or 100 foot or whatever it is is not practical in a lot of cases.

We need to simplify the farm management programs. The simpler you can make them the more useful they'll be to the farmer, the more they'll put them into practice. Finally, I would suggest that as we get into this whole carbon greenhouse emissions sector we know that by reducing certain emissions we can also improve water quality. And I think this is particularly the case with gases such as methane.

We look at this as probably our opportunity in the carbon urban market. So I would suggest maybe take a look at some of these, whether it's mirrored in creating some programs

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having to do with emissions, particularly methane and could be beneficial to the farmers down the road, carbon as well as improving the quality. Thank you very much.

MS: Thank you.

Doug McKalip: Is Larry Kehl still here from the Pennsylvania Association?

MS: Is it still morning or afternoon?

MS: It's afternoon.

MS: Thanks. Good afternoon. As you can see my prepared statement is not up to date already. My name is Larry Kehl. I'm President of the Pennsylvania State Association of Conservation Districts. And the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts represents all 66 districts of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Most of my stuff in my prepared statement was already discussed, so I'm just going to go off the wall.

I was with the Conservation District about 15 years now, no, 18 years roughly. You got to understand I live between

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two country clubs, okay? I farm a little bit differently than most people. I make a lot of hay. My neighbors drive Mercedes, Jaguars, stuff like that. It's not a regular neighborhood, but I learned to adjust, yeah, a little different.

I make more hay in an hour than my dad used to make in a whole year with my equipment. So I changed. And this is something we have to do, we have to change. I know Craig there - our conservationist from the state I think he's very aware of my thoughts here, but the conservation districts are here to help you.

And on the money issue that \$188 million or \$186 million, it's not going to go too far. We all know that. So we have to know how we can do the best with what we have. About two years ago I believe it was, I was with the state conservationist, Dennis Wolff, our Secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Agriculture. We were on a boat on the Chesapeake.

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And that was very eye opening; you know how can we get that cleaned up? And you have to understand this is everybody and everything. You know if Virginia, Maryland gets all this money they should be able to do it, but they can't. it's only half the land mass. So you have to decide how you're going to handle these programs there. And that's going to be very interesting.

But then again I must say the issue is we have to have clean water coming down our streams. That water should be clean before it gets to our farms and after it gets to our farms. Like I said I'm a full time farmer. I do all this other stuff part time, volunteer, whatever you can do. But we are here to help you as a state conservation district. Thank you.

MS: thank you.

MS: Dick Marzolf and then we're going to have Sally Claggett representing forestry.

MS: My name is Dick Marzolf. I'm a first year director from the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District Board in the Shenandoah Valley. On this short notice I cannot claim to advise the NRCS on the perspective of the

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district, but what I'm about to say is based on my experience, the basic science and water resources policy, a couple of disclaimers. These ideas are not new but I offer them to underline my support for others who have said the same thing and, to protect the board that I work with, my colleagues, I must say that my ideas do not represent unanimous consent, although I have had some support.

Today we're focused on the control of eutrophication in the Bay by using best management practices in the drainage basin to control non-point sources of excess nutrients. However, there is a mismatch. Recent claims of progress, and you've heard some of them this morning, intriguing non-point source nutrient loading from tributary watersheds are encouraging.

These claims however are not matched by improvement in the eutrophic conditions in the Bay and some deadlines are not being met. This is the result of work by geographic kinds of conservation in the Bay itself. This is a frustrating and expensive disconnect. I offer two ideas that would

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help the NRCS guide and evaluate the use of cost sharing BMPs.

First, with monitoring document the geographic distribution of the highest nutrient loading sources in the Bay in Washington; those have been called hot spots by others. Methods and some results about this are known. For example, the Sparrow model has been mentioned a time or two. That's a statistical model that incorporates spatial data.

The second idea is to support a program to evaluate the performance of BMPs put in place to reduce nutrient loading. This is a call for admitted measurement of geochemical parameters to help guide confidence in modeling efforts that are using surrogate parameters. This requires nutrient and hydrologic measurements and analysis to check existing estimates of loading. Now monitoring promises to be expensive and it's likely to cost too much to monitor all of the projects.

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You might however oversee the design and conduct of sampling of projects; that is, treat selective BMPs as manipulative experiments, thus monitoring becomes data collection at the pace of expected change. Development of the use of remote sensors or data loggers ought to be useful here and the technology is changing very rapidly. This approach is compelled it seems to me by our incomplete knowledge of the effectiveness of BMPs and the knowledge that improvement in the Bay is limited.

You guys are tough. You can sit here through all of this.

(LAUGHTER) Thank you.

MS: Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

FS: Hi. Am I the last person? Oh, okay, darn. Hi, Sally Claggett with the U.S. Forest Service. I came to speak on behalf of forestry naturally and somewhat for the forest community of the Chesapeake Bay. And mainly my point is I hope for this extra funding for the Chesapeake and it will help us better integrate forestry at all levels of the Farm Bill. I think the Chesapeake is well set up to be an exemplary watershed program for the country in doing so.

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We have many members or we had many members of the forestry community in the audience. We got to hear from Dean Cumbia, I won't repeat some of his comments, but I think that this is a great opportunity. I will say again our forestry community is strong. We have our forestry directive that was signed in December by Mark Ray and all six states as well as the Commission, EPA and Washington, D.C.

And in that directive, which I know Dick and Greg Derickson are very familiar with, we are targeting a valuable forest for water quality. We've already done a lot of this work. I think that the key point here, one example from the directive I think this Farm Bill money could be useful for is to help us help support our commitment, our collective commitment to improve system markets and the ability to transact those ecosystem services including, especially with multiple ecosystems that serve as benefits.

And it's not just nutrient training, we're talking about carbon, habitat and many other products that our natural resources provide. I want to plug also for greater accountability and [unint] the suite of environmental

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objectives that we are pursuing here that again are additionality to the water quality emphasis.

And finally I'd like to say a few words about CREP. I hear that there's a lot of support here in this room today. And I am aware that the Bay is already a priority for CRP in this Farm Bill, which is very exciting. I think Arlen you mentioned this idea of a new CREP agreement. And I'm pretty excited about that. We've been talking already with NRCS and FSA about some possibilities there.

Also about two weeks ago we had an international conference on repairing ecosystems and got some great new energy generated around some of these ideas and cost effective measures that are proven that will help, will make much more sense as far as restoring stream [unint]. So I just would like to wrap up by saying that we're here to help you. We have a forestry work group. We are already organized. We're working closely with Dick and Craig and other NRCS folks across the watershed. And this is a really exciting time. So thank you very much.

MS: Thank you. (APPLAUSE)

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Doug McKalip: There are three final names that I have on the list that I've been given. I want to reiterate that you can submit written comments, fax, e-mail. Dan Lawson, if you would stand up once more to identify yourself. Dan will be collecting any written comments that folks have. And his contact information is out at the registration table. You can pick up a sheet; you'll have his address and ways to get in contact with Dan.

But we have Karen Anderson from the Friends of the Shenandoah River, Leon Ressler with Penn State Extension and Doug Parker with the Mid Atlantic Regional Water Partnership. If I did not read your name and you believe that you were marked down to give a presentation I'll be in the back of the room, please see me. And if we've made a mistake we'll go over the list and check it twice. Karen.

FS: Thank you very much for this opportunity. I'm here to remind the NRCS about a resource that is available to them. One key to be able to promote environmental stewardship to the use of BMPs that include [unint] buffers, easements and fencing, one has to be able to demonstrate its measurable effect, that the goal of reducing nutrient and sediment

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loading in the watershed is accomplished. A way of doing this is with water quality monitoring, including chemical, [unint] and [unint] assessments.

In the Shenandoah River watershed there is a cooperative volunteer water monitoring program already in place to assist in this. The Friends of the Shenandoah River and over 100 volunteers are dedicated to working cooperatively with the community, other environmental organizations, industry, local and state agencies and officials to improve the health of the Shenandoah River.

The Friends of the Shenandoah River operate in Virginia, a DEQ Tier Three certified lab that provides analysis of the water samples collected by the volunteers in the Shenandoah River watershed. This monitoring program is a local resource that ... I'm sorry, with volunteers that live in the communities we are able provide and [unint] venues that offer opportunities to educate local homeowners, farmers, industry and local government about watershed issues.

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We are also able to rally local support to encourage and promote good stewardship practices. When the decision is being made for the allocation of available funds, please give consideration to the Friends, environmental organizations, and their direct connections to the community and their strength. Thank you very much.

MS: Good afternoon. I'm Leon Ressler, regional director of the Penn State Extension for the Capital Region and South Central Pennsylvania, nine counties there. Last week I called a couple of farmers in Lancaster County and invited them to come with me today and they all pled pretty much work but a few of them gave me comments to pass along.

I talked to Steve Roth [ph] who's a nationally known no till innovator on his vegetable farm and he really feels like cover crops are more important than even no till and for him that's quite a statement. And he would like to see us fund the research for cover crops and thinks we ought to have a cover crop researcher or specialist in Pennsylvania.

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I talked to Jeff [unint], a swine producer and farms several hundred acres of mill crops. And he feels that it's really important to get more money for conservation practices. He said he just installed a couple of terraces and waterways and he was only able to do that because of the cost availability. So he's like to see more money pumped into EQIP for that. He feels that if you keep the soil in place that will solve the phosphorus problem.

I asked him if he had any comments on the phosphorus issue. He said he does have plans for the phosphorus issue, but nothing that's diplomatic. (LAUGHTER) But he did say that the phosphorous issue and solving it is the number one threat to maintaining the viability of the farm, certainly in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. We are an animal based agriculture in Pennsylvania less so than some of the areas.

But he also felt that in Pennsylvania we have some tax based programs for cost sharing of no till equipment and so on, he thought that was kind of the thing we ought to look at and maybe rolling into this program. So I'll just add a few segues, a couple of my thoughts. As I said

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Pennsylvania's heavily animal agriculture, and the phosphorous problem, particularly in Lancaster County is starting to be a make or break issue in terms of maintaining the viability of our farms there.

In the day of almost five dollars a gallon for diesel fuel, and almost a dollar a pound to buy back your replacement nitrogen fertilizer it was a solution of either get rid of the animals, which would collapse the system or put all the manure and track it over the hill to somewhere else, really is not going to work. We need to be funding some research to look at alternative cost effective solutions for phosphorous such as removal and concentration of phosphorous perhaps with [unint] using it for energy.

At the beginning of the day we talked about some discretionary funds in this program. I understand there are policies on how money can be spent, but I think one thing we need to think about is flexibility and if there is any way we can within the policy fund some of these things like [unint] research or phosphorous research which is a little different than simply paying for a practice.

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I think we need to really think seriously about with the amount of money that's in this program looking at some of these other needs and finding a way to fund them. If policies don't allow maybe we need to take a look at rethinking some of our policies and how they utilize some of this money. Thank you.

MS: Good afternoon. It's an honor to be here today and be able to speak with you all. I guess I'm batting clean up here at the bottom of the order. I'm happy to be here today to talk with you. I didn't know I was talking until about ten minutes ago. I'm filling in for Kevin [unint] at the Chesapeake Research Consortia. He had to go to another commitment.

My name's Dan Parker. I represent the Mid Atlantic water program, a consortium of nine universities, land grant universities in the Chesapeake Bay and Mid Atlantic regions. We're funded by USDA CSREES. My home base is the University of Maryland, College Park. I'm an [unint] economics professor there as well.

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We have submitted written comments already to the program so I won't go over those. I just wanted to make a couple of quick points. Senator Cardin's staff mentioned that the funds are here to help improve water quality and I think it's important that we keep our eye on that goal as we look at how we want to spend this money and how we want to operate these programs.

Implementation and use of the funds that is going to involve real changes on farmland and by farmers and land owners and hopefully those changes are going to be producing outcomes. And as part of that then we would like to sort of, these three Mid Atlantic water programs, the Chesapeake Research Consortia as well. The scientific technical advisory committee for the Chesapeake Bay program has also been involved in looking at this issue.

We're interested in providing our support and saying that the [unint] evaluation is critical to showing proper use of these funds but more importantly to creating long term support for water quality improvement programs. And the regional scientific community that we represent is ready

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and willing to support and participate in the evaluation and monitoring of these water quality changes. This can serve not only to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay but also to help illuminate lessons learned from here for other basins throughout the country. Thank you for your support.

Dick Coombe: This has certainly been a great day and we appreciate all the input and the ideas and what I'd like to do is turn the mike over to my boss, Chief Arlen Lancaster, and I appreciate my colleagues commenting here. I was also impressed by the fact that you came from all different walks of life, from all across the Bay. A few of the staff members said Dick we'll be lucky if we have 50, but, wow, I never expected this much. Arlen, thank you for coming and if you want to wrap up.

Chief Lancaster: Sure. I just want to again thank you all for your participation today. I know it's been a long morning for many folks. And I also recognize that people traveled a great distance to come here. This is extremely helpful to us as we look at those items that are discretionary in the statute, those things that we have to make decisions on it's critical to have this public input.

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As somebody mentioned this is our first listening session related to the 2008 Farm Bill. And I think it is a tremendous way to kick off that public participation as we work to develop how we're going to carry out these programs to make sure that they're successful, not only in meeting the goals of the statute, in meeting the water quality of the Bay, but also successful in meeting the needs of the producers who ultimately are going to be the ones utilizing these programs and those authorities.

So thank you very much for your time, for your patience. And again the record will remain open and if you have individuals who may be interested in commenting on how these programs should operate, please encourage them to submit them. And we will continue to maintain this dialogue as we move through the rest of our programs. So again thank you very much. (APPLAUSE)

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