



Paying for Environmental Outcomes in Pennsylvania

Pennsylvania legislators have an exciting opportunity to use state funding to pay for environmental results after—not before—they are delivered. As part of [SB 832 / HB 1901](#) (the Clean Streams Fund), the Clean Water Procurement Program would let Pennsylvania directly buy pollution reductions just as easily as the state can buy office supplies.

Core elements of the \$25 million Clean Water Procurement Program:

- 1. A clear, quantifiable environmental outcome:** The program pays for modelled reductions in nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution flowing into the Chesapeake Bay
- 2. Agreement on how to measure the outcome:** For years, all Chesapeake Bay states have had an agreed upon [model](#) that allows them to convert hundreds of actions into their anticipated nutrient pollution reduction benefit. The program uses this model.
- 3. Technical assistance flexibility:** Although technical assistance can be crucial, this program is built on the expectation that there are many well-established practices and projects that farmers can install with the assistance of restoration companies or local conservation agencies to avoid the bottleneck of requiring NRCS approval.
- 4. A transparent priority system:** The bill requires the state to share its scoring system so anyone can figure out what gets funded, especially once the program has been run for a few years. Specifically, Pennsylvania would be looking for cost-effective nutrient pollution outcomes, projects that provide co-benefits, and inclusion of small farms.
- 5. Verification:** All applicants must include a verification plan which will be approved and then conducted by the department
- 6. First payment:** The program is set up so it can only pay for environmental outcomes that haven't already been paid for by a government agency. If a portion of costs have been covered by another program, the funding request (and amount of outcomes) just needs to be adjusted accordingly.

Why is it important?

Farmers know their land and operations better than anyone. And experts have spent decades finding and developing the best ways to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay and in the third of Pennsylvania's rivers that are impaired. This program is an innovative opportunity to make the best use of tax dollars for safeguarding and restoring precious waterways.

How you can help

As Pennsylvania legislators work through the state budget process, you can make your voice heard in support of this ground-breaking program. If you live in Pennsylvania, you can [find your state legislators](#) and send them a letter or email asking them to support the Clean Water Procurement Program. If you don't, consider contacting either the bills' sponsors to thank them or the chair of the Appropriations Committee to expound how innovative this bill is.