Since 2009, the Choose Clean Water Coalition has worked to harness the collective power of more than 230 organizations to advocate for healthy communities, habitats, and clean water across the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Although much progress has been made, the natural systems of this beautiful estuary remain under attack. Our rivers, streams, and the water that we drink face serious threats, including pollution from urban and suburban stormwater runoff, pollution from farmland, deforestation, and sea level rise caused by climate change. The Coalition will continue to protect and restore our natural resources through our policy priorities, which are adjusted each year to ensure our work is focused on the most pressing issues.

The Chesapeake Bay watershed currently faces direct threats to the funding and conservation victories the Coalition has worked so hard to secure over the last nine years. From proposals to eliminate state and federal funding, to the reversal of critical clean water protections, the Coalition is seeing more attacks on our water than ever before. This drastic shift drove the Coalition to evaluate the way we approach our work and the strategies we adopt to affect change. It is clear that the future of clean and healthy water depends on bold, immediate, and coordinated action.

Over the last year, the Coalition saw a dramatic increase in people and organizations activating to protect clean and healthy water, and defending against political threats. This includes meeting with members of Congress, demanding action on social media, attending public hearings, and voicing overall concern about clean water threats. The Coalition has the ability to harness this enthusiasm and energy to secure wins for clean water and healthy communities around the watershed.

This five year strategic plan positions the Coalition to provide the tools our conservation community needs to be successful. We will continue to harmonize our response around federal issues while also expanding our role to gain ground at the state and local level. This plan lays out our approach to creating a unified and inclusive movement that will ensure clean water is returned to our rivers, streams, and the Chesapeake Bay.
GOAL 1

Cultivate clean water champions and advance clean and healthy water policy goals at the federal, state, and local level.

Achieving clean water and healthy communities throughout the Chesapeake region will require securing policy wins by influencing decision-makers and participating in policy discussions at all levels of government: federal, state and local. The Coalition will unify advocacy voices at each level of government, with a priority placed on federal concerns.

- **Educate and influence** federal decision-makers to achieve desired policy outcomes by engaging member organizations.
- **Continue to play a critical role** through state leads and coordinators in order to be a clearinghouse of state policy, serve as a bridge between state and local partners, and facilitate information sharing on multistate issues.
- **Amplify, support, and engage** in local campaigns by prioritizing clean water issues and key decision-makers.

GOAL 2

Strengthen and build the internal capacity of our members to achieve their missions and further clean water policy.

The Coalition will continue to foster a collaborative environment by providing issue experts the space to convene, communicate, and share best practices. Further, we provide members access to science, legal, and advocacy expertise, communications and digital services, and other capacity building support.

- **Achieve policy goals** through a collaborative and communicative model by convening members around strategically important topics and issues of importance.
- **Serve as experts** on communications for member organizations, including strategy, tactics, best practices, methods, and systems to message on our issues as necessary.
- **Serve as the clearinghouse** on messaging best practices on clean water in our region and, eventually, on our specific targeted constituencies.
- **Create sustainable collaboration** by growing the pool of resources available to our members.

GOAL 3

Engage a larger and more inclusive cross-section of the public in the clean water movement.

Support our members in more efficiently activating new and existing supporters, enrolling a larger cross-section of the public in this effort, and sharing compelling stories from across the watershed with decision makers, funders and other audiences. These approaches will strategically target areas of the watershed through outreach and constituency-building efforts to build power and awareness.

- **Identify the current audiences** we engage, their affinities and geography, centers of power and influences, and gaps in our work by conducting a comprehensive network-mapping project across the watershed.
- **Elevate member projects, events, and campaigns** to amplify the power of the Coalition and the impact of its members.