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Testimony

Before the Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations, House of  
Representatives

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CHESAPEAKE BAY  
PROGRAM

Improved Strategies Needed  
to Better Guide Restoration  
Efforts

Statement of Anu K. Mittal, Director  
Natural Resources and Environment





Highlights of GAO-06-614T, a testimony before the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives

## Why GAO Did This Study

The Chesapeake Bay Program (Bay Program) was created in 1983 when Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, the District of Columbia, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agreed to establish a partnership to restore the Chesapeake Bay. The partnership's most recent agreement, *Chesapeake 2000*, sets out an agenda and five broad goals to guide the restoration effort through 2010. This testimony summarizes the findings of an October 2005 GAO report (GAO-06-96) on (1) the extent to which appropriate measures for assessing restoration progress have been established, (2) the extent to which current reporting mechanisms clearly and accurately describe the bay's overall health, (3) how much funding was provided for the effort for fiscal years 1995 through 2004, and (4) how effectively the effort is being coordinated and managed.

## What GAO Recommends

GAO made three recommendations in October 2005 to ensure that EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program Office completes its efforts to develop and implement an integrated assessment approach, revises its reporting approach to improve the effectiveness and credibility of its reports, and develops a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that takes into account available resources. GAO is not making any new recommendations in this statement.

[www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-614T](http://www.gao.gov/cgi-bin/getrpt?GAO-06-614T).

To view the full product, including the scope and methodology, click on the link above. For more information, contact Anu K. Mittal at (202) 512-3841 or mittala@gao.gov.

July 13, 2006

# CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM

## Improved Strategies Needed to Better Guide Restoration Efforts

### What GAO Found

The Bay Program had developed over 100 measures to assess progress toward meeting certain restoration commitments and providing information to guide management decisions. However, the program had not yet developed an integrated approach that would allow it to translate these individual measures into an assessment of overall progress toward achieving the five broad restoration goals outlined in *Chesapeake 2000*. For example, while the Bay Program had appropriate measures to track crab, oyster, and rockfish populations, it did not have an approach for integrating the results of these measures to assess progress toward the agreement's goal of protecting and restoring the bay's living resources. In response to GAO's recommendation, the Bay Program adopted an initial integrated approach in January 2006.

The *State of the Chesapeake Bay* reports did not provide effective and credible information on the current health status of the bay. Because these reports focused on individual trends for certain living resources and pollutants, it was not easy for the public to determine what these data collectively said about the overall health status of the bay. The credibility of these reports had been undermined because the program had commingled actual monitoring data with results of program actions and a predictive model, and the latter two tended to downplay the deteriorated conditions of the bay. Moreover, the Bay Program's reports were prepared by the same program staff who were responsible for managing the restoration effort, which led to reports that projected a rosier picture of the bay's health than may have been warranted. In response to GAO's recommendation, the program has developed a new reporting format and plans to have the new report independently assessed.

From fiscal years 1995 through 2004, the restoration effort received about \$3.7 billion in direct funding from 11 key federal agencies; the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; and the District of Columbia. These funds were used for activities that supported water quality protection and restoration, sound land use, vital habitat protection and restoration, living resources protection and restoration, and stewardship and community engagement. During this period, the restoration effort also received an additional \$1.9 billion in funding from other federal and state programs for activities that indirectly contributed to the restoration effort.

The Bay Program did not have a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy to help target limited resources to those activities that would best achieve the goals outlined in *Chesapeake 2000*. Although the program had adopted 10 key commitments to focus the partners' efforts and had developed numerous planning documents, some of these documents were inconsistent with each other or were perceived as unachievable by program partners. In response to GAO's recommendation, the Bay Program is currently developing a Web-based system to unify its various planning documents and has adopted a funding priority framework. These actions, while important, fall short of the strategy recommended by GAO.

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am pleased to be here today to participate in your oversight hearing of the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort. As you know, the Chesapeake Bay is the nation's largest estuary and has been recognized by Congress as a national treasure. In response to the deteriorating conditions of the bay, in 1983, the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission;<sup>1</sup> and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) first partnered to protect and restore the bay by establishing the Chesapeake Bay Program (Bay Program). Subsequent agreements in 1987, 1992, and 2000 reaffirmed the partners' commitment to bay restoration, and in their most recent agreement, *Chesapeake 2000*, which was signed in June 2000, they established 102 commitments organized under five broad restoration goals to be achieved by 2010.

My testimony today is based on GAO's October 2005 report on the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort and addresses (1) the extent to which the Bay Program has established appropriate measures for assessing restoration progress, (2) the extent to which the reporting mechanisms the Bay Program uses clearly and accurately describe the bay's overall health, (3) how much funding was provided by federal and state partners for restoring the Chesapeake Bay for fiscal years 1995 through 2004 and for what purposes, and (4) how effectively the restoration effort is being coordinated and managed.<sup>2</sup>

In summary, we found the following:

- The Bay Program had established over 100 measures to assess trends in various living resources such as oysters and crabs, and pollutants such as nitrogen and phosphorus. However, the program had not yet developed an approach that would allow it to integrate all of these measures and thereby assess the progress made by the overall restoration effort in achieving the five goals outlined in *Chesapeake 2000*. We recommended that the Chesapeake Bay Program Office develop such an approach that would allow the program to combine its individual measures into a few broader-scale measures that could then

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<sup>1</sup>The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a tristate legislative assembly representing Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

<sup>2</sup>GAO, *Chesapeake Bay Program: Improved Strategies Are Needed to Better Assess, Report, and Manage Restoration Progress*, GAO-06-96 (Washington, D.C.: Oct. 28, 2005).

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be used to assess key ecosystem attributes and present an overall assessment of this complex ecosystem restoration project. In response to our recommendation, the Bay Program has developed an initial approach, but more work is still needed before a fully integrated approach for assessing restoration progress can be implemented.

- The Bay Program's primary mechanism for reporting on the health status of the bay—the *State of the Chesapeake Bay* report—did not provide an effective or credible assessment of the bay's current health status. These reports were not effective because, like the program's measures, they focused on individual species and pollutants instead of providing an overall assessment of the bay's health. Often these reports showed diverging trends for certain aspects of the ecosystem, making it difficult for the public and other stakeholders to determine what the current condition of the bay really was. These reports were also not credible because they (1) commingled data on the bay's health with program actions and modeling results, which tended to downplay the deteriorated conditions of the bay and (2) were not subject to an independent review process. As a result, we believe that the Bay Program reports projected a rosier picture of the health of the bay than may have been warranted. In response to our recommendation to clarify how it reports on the health of the bay and management actions to restore the bay, the Bay Program has developed a new reporting format that separately describes the bay's current health and the progress made in implementing management actions. In addition, the Bay Program plans to have its Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee provide an independent assessment of the new reports.<sup>3</sup> This assessment is scheduled to be completed by late summer.
- About \$3.7 billion in direct funding was provided for the restoration effort by 11 key federal agencies; the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; and the District of Columbia from fiscal years 1995

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<sup>3</sup>The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee is one of the Bay Program's seven committees that form the organizational and planning structure for the restoration effort. The committee provides scientific and technical guidance to the Bay Program on measures to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay.

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through 2004.<sup>4</sup> An additional \$1.9 billion was provided for activities that had an indirect impact on bay restoration.

- The Bay Program did not have a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that would allow it to strategically target limited resources to the most effective restoration activities. Recognizing that it could not manage all 102 commitments outlined in *Chesapeake 2000*, the Bay Program had focused its efforts on 10 keystone commitments. Although the Bay Program had developed numerous planning documents, some of the documents were inconsistent with each other and some of the plans were perceived to be unachievable by stakeholders. Moreover, the program invested scarce resources in developing and updating certain plans, even though it knew that it did not have the resources to implement them. While we recognize that the Bay Program often has no assurance about the level of funds that may be available beyond the short term, this large and difficult restoration project cannot be effectively managed and coordinated without a realistic strategy that unifies all of its planning documents and targets its limited resources to the most effective restoration activities. In response to our recommendation to develop a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy, the Bay Program is developing a Web-based approach that will unify its various planning documents and adopted a funding priority framework. However, the program has not yet developed a comprehensive implementation strategy that reflects what can realistically be accomplished given available resources. We continue to believe that such a strategy is needed for the program to move forward in a more strategic and well-coordinated manner.

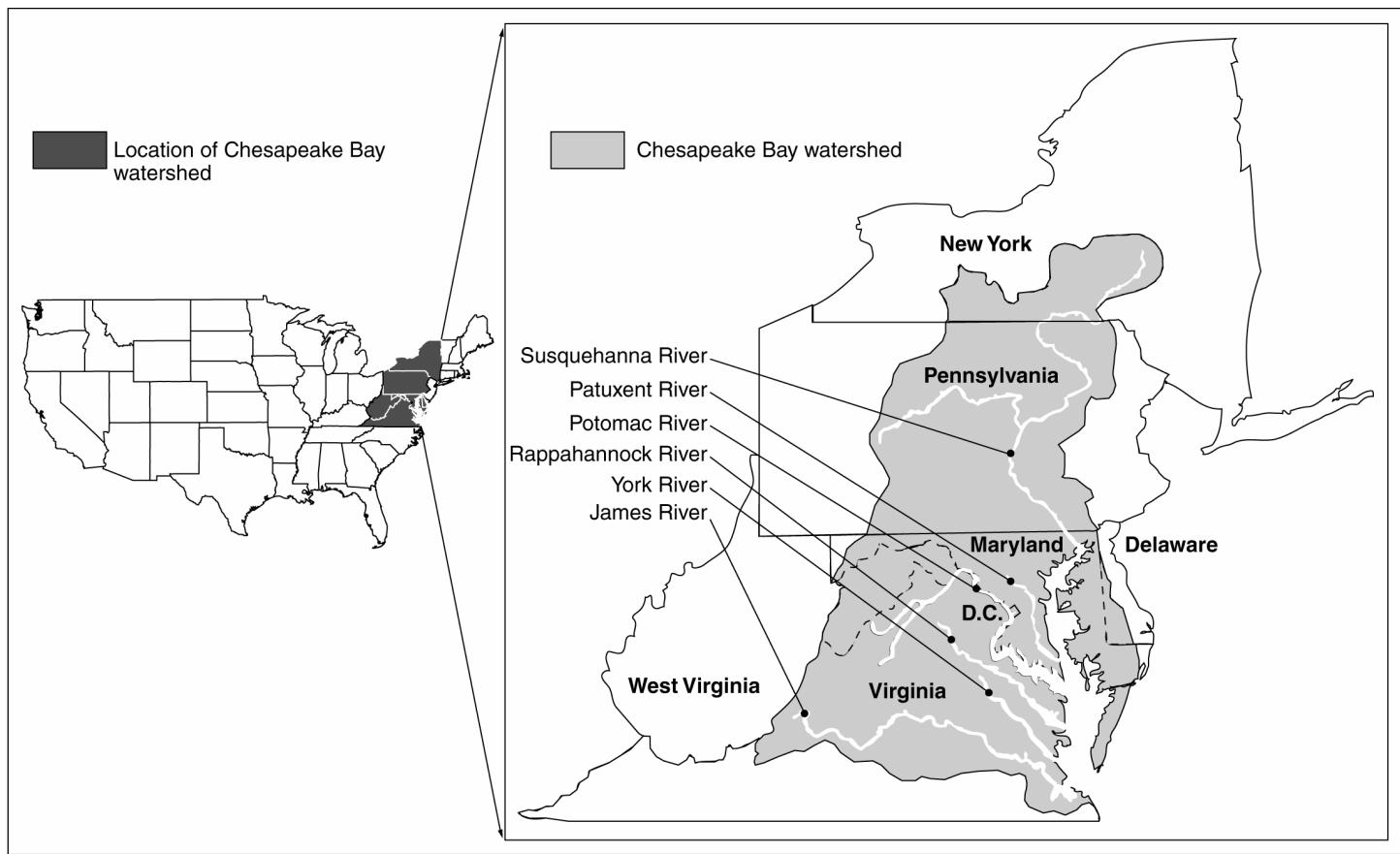
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<sup>4</sup>Key federal agencies include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency, Forest Service, and Natural Resources Conservation Service; Department of Commerce's National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Department of Defense's Army, Army Corps of Engineers, and Navy/Marine Corps; Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, and National Park Service; and EPA. For purposes of our report and this testimony, we defined direct funds as those that are provided exclusively for bay restoration activities (e.g., increasing the oyster population) or those that would no longer be made available in the absence of the restoration effort.

## Background

The Chesapeake Bay is the largest of the nation's estuaries, measuring nearly 200 miles long and 35 miles wide at its widest point. Roughly half of the bay's water comes from the Atlantic Ocean, and the other half is freshwater that drains from the land and enters the bay through the many rivers and streams in its watershed basin. As shown in figure 1, the bay's watershed covers 64,000 square miles and spans parts of six states—Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia—and the District of Columbia.

**Figure 1: Chesapeake Bay Watershed**



Sources: Chesapeake Bay Program Office and GAO.

Over time, the bay's ecosystem has deteriorated. The bay's "dead zones"—where too little oxygen is available to support fish and shellfish—have increased, and many species of fish and shellfish have experienced major

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declines in population. The decline in the bay's living resources has been cause for a great deal of public and political attention.

Responding to public outcry, on December 9, 1983, representatives of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania; the District of Columbia; the EPA; and the Chesapeake Bay Commission signed the first Chesapeake Bay agreement. Their agreement established the Chesapeake Executive Council and resulted in the Chesapeake Bay Program—a partnership that directs and conducts the restoration of the bay. Subsequent agreements in 1987 and again in 1992 reaffirmed the signatories' commitment to restore the bay. The partners signed the most current agreement, *Chesapeake 2000*, on June 28, 2000. *Chesapeake 2000*—identified by the Bay Program as its strategic plan—sets out an agenda and goals to guide the restoration efforts through 2010 and beyond. In *Chesapeake 2000*, the signatories agreed to 102 commitments—including management actions, such as assessing the trends of particular species, as well as actions that directly affect the health of the bay. These commitments are organized under the following five broad restoration goals:

- *Protecting and restoring living resources*—14 commitments to restore, enhance, and protect the finfish, shellfish and other living resources, their habitats and ecological relationships to sustain all fisheries and provide for a balanced ecosystem;
- *Protecting and restoring vital habitats*—18 commitments to preserve, protect, and restore those habitats and natural areas that are vital to the survival and diversity of the living resources of the bay and its rivers;
- *Protecting and restoring water quality*—19 commitments to achieve and maintain the water quality necessary to support the aquatic living resources of the bay and its tributaries and to protect human health;
- *Sound land use*—28 commitments to develop, promote, and achieve sound land use practices that protect and restore watershed resources and water quality, maintain reduced pollutant loadings for the bay and its tributaries, and restore and preserve aquatic living resources; and
- *Stewardship and community engagement*—23 commitments to promote individual stewardship and assist individuals, community-based organizations, businesses, local governments and schools to undertake initiatives to achieve the goals and commitments of the agreement.

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As the only federal signatory to the Chesapeake Bay agreements, EPA is responsible for spearheading the federal effort within the Bay Program through its Chesapeake Bay Program Office. Among other things, the Chesapeake Bay Program Office is to develop and make available information about the environmental quality and living resources of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem; help the signatories to the Chesapeake Bay agreement develop and implement specific plans to carry out their responsibilities; and coordinate EPA's actions with those of other appropriate entities to develop strategies to improve the water quality and living resources in the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem.

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## The Bay Program's Measures Had Not Been Integrated to Assess Overall Restoration Progress

The Bay Program had established 101 measures to assess progress on individual aspects of the Bay. For example, the Bay Program had developed measures for determining trends in individual fish and shellfish populations, such as crabs, oysters, and rockfish. The Bay Program had also developed other measures to provide the information it needs to make management decisions. For example, to help inform its decisions regarding the effects of airborne nitrogen compounds and chemical contaminants in the bay ecosystem and to help establish reduction goals for these contaminants, the Bay Program had a measure to estimate vehicle emissions and compare them to vehicle miles traveled.

While the Bay Program had established these 101 measures, it had not developed an approach that would allow it to translate these individual measures into an overall assessment of the progress made in achieving the five broad restoration goals. For example, although the Bay Program had developed measures for determining trends in individual fish and shellfish populations, it had not yet devised a way to integrate those measures to assess the overall progress made in achieving its *Living Resource Protection and Restoration* goal. According to an expert panel of nationally recognized ecosystem assessment and restoration experts convened by GAO, in a complex ecosystem restoration project like the Chesapeake Bay, overall progress should be assessed by using an integrated approach. This approach should combine measures that provide information on individual species or pollutants into a few broader-scale measures that can be used to assess key ecosystem attributes, such as biological conditions.

The signatories to the Chesapeake Bay agreement have discussed the need for an integrated approach over the past several years. However, according to an official from the Chesapeake Bay Program Office, until recently they did not believe that the program could develop an approach

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that was scientifically defensible, given their limited resources. The program began an effort in November 2004 to develop, among other things, a framework for organizing the program's measures and a structure for how the redesign work should be accomplished. In our report, we recommended that the Chesapeake Bay Program Office complete its efforts to develop and implement such an integrated approach. In January 2006, the Bay Program formally adopted an initial integrated approach for assessing both bay health and management actions taken to restore the bay. However, according to a Bay Program official, more work is needed before a fully integrated approach for assessing restoration progress can be implemented.

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## The Bay Program's Reports Did Not Effectively Communicate the Status of the Bay's Health

The Bay Program's primary mechanism for reporting on the health status of the bay—the *State of the Chesapeake Bay* report—was intended to provide the citizens of the bay region with a snapshot of the bay's health. However, our review found that the *State of the Chesapeake Bay* report did not effectively communicate the current health status of the bay because it mirrored the shortcomings in the program's measures by focusing on the status of individual species or pollutants instead of providing information on a core set of ecosystem characteristics. For example, the 2002 and 2004 *State of the Chesapeake Bay* reports provided data on oysters, crab, rockfish, and bay grasses, but the reports did not provide an overall assessment of the current status of living resources in the bay or the health of the bay. Instead, data were reported for each species individually. The 2004 *State of the Chesapeake Bay* report included a graphic that depicts oyster harvest levels at historic lows, with a mostly decreasing trend over time, and a rockfish graphic that shows a generally increasing population trend over time. However, the report did not provide contextual information that explained how these measures are interrelated or what the diverging trends meant about the overall health of the bay. Our experts agreed that the 2004 report was visually pleasing but lacked a clear, overall picture of the bay's health and told us that the public would probably not be able to easily and accurately assess the current condition of the bay from the information reported.

We also found that the credibility of the *State of the Chesapeake Bay* reports had been undermined by two key factors. First, the Bay Program had commingled data from three sources when reporting on the health of the bay. Specifically, the reports mixed actual monitoring information on the bay's health status with results from a predictive model and the results of specific management actions. The latter two results did little to inform readers about the current health status of the bay and tended to downplay

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the bay's actual condition. Second, the Bay Program had not established an independent review process to ensure that its reports were accurate and credible. The officials who managed and were responsible for the restoration effort also analyzed, interpreted, and reported the data to the public. We believe this lack of independence in reporting led to the Bay Program's projecting a rosier view of the health of the bay than may have been warranted. Our expert panelists believe that an independent review panel—to either review the bay's health reports before issuance or to analyze and report on the health status independently of the Bay Program—would significantly improve the credibility of the program's reports. We recommended that the Chesapeake Bay Program Office revise its reporting approach to improve the effectiveness and credibility of its reports. In response to our recommendation, the Bay Program developed a new reporting format that was released for public review and comment in March 2006. The new report, entitled *Chesapeake Bay 2005 Health and Restoration Assessment*, is divided into two parts: part one is an assessment of ecosystem health and part two is an assessment of progress made in implementing management actions. The new report appears to have a more effective communications framework and clearly distinguishes between the health of the bay and the management actions being taken. In addition, the Bay Program plans to have its Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee independently review the new report and the process used to develop it. This review is planned for completion by late summer.

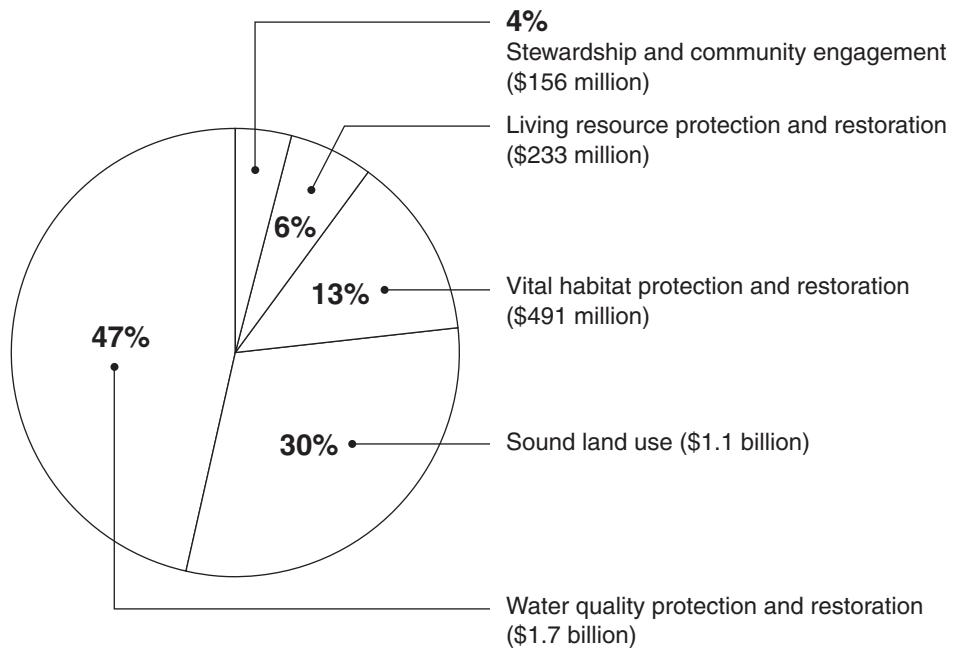
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## Federal Agencies and States Provided Billions of Dollars in Both Direct and Indirect Funding for Restoration Activities

Eleven key federal agencies; the states of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia; and the District of Columbia provided almost \$3.7 billion in direct funding from fiscal years 1995 through 2004 to restore the bay. Federal agencies provided a total of approximately \$972 million in direct funding, while the states and the District of Columbia provided approximately \$2.7 billion in direct funding for the restoration effort over the 10-year period. Of the federal agencies, the Department of Defense's Army Corps of Engineers provided the greatest amount of direct funding—\$293.5 million. Of the states, Maryland provided the greatest amount of direct funding—more than \$1.8 billion—which is over \$1.1 billion more than any other state. Typically, the states provided about 75 percent of the direct funding for restoration, and the funding has generally increased over the 10-year period. As figure 2 shows, the largest percentage of direct funding—approximately 47 percent—went to water quality protection and restoration.

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**Figure 2: Percentage of the Total Direct Funding Provided for Addressing Each of the Five Chesapeake 2000 Goals, Fiscal Years 1995 through 2004**



Source: GAO analysis of agency data, in constant 2004 dollars.

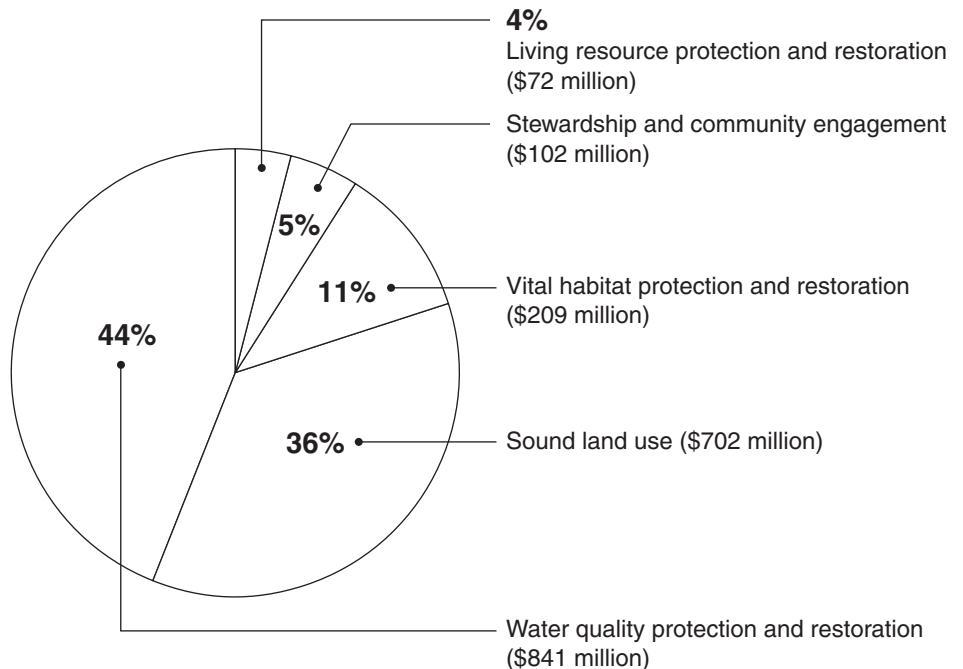
Ten of the key federal agencies, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia provided about \$1.9 billion in additional funding from fiscal years 1995 through 2004 for activities that indirectly affected bay restoration. These activities were conducted as part of broader agency efforts and/or would continue without the restoration effort. Federal agencies provided approximately \$935 million in indirect funding, while Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia together provided approximately \$991 million in indirect funding for the restoration effort over the 10-year period.<sup>5</sup> Of the federal agencies, the U.S. Department of Agriculture provided the greatest amount of indirect funding—\$496.5 million—primarily through the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Of the states, Pennsylvania provided the greatest amount of indirect

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<sup>5</sup> In addition to the funding provided for the restoration of the bay, EPA provided more than \$1 billion to Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania through its Clean Water State Revolving Fund program during fiscal years 1995 through 2004. The funds provide low-cost loans or other financial assistance for a wide range of water quality infrastructure projects and other activities, such as implementing agricultural best management practices.

funding—\$863.8 million. As with direct funding, indirect funding for the restoration effort had also generally increased over fiscal years 1995 through 2004. As figure 3 shows, the largest percentage of indirect funding—approximately 44 percent—went to water quality protection and restoration.

**Figure 3: Percentage of the Total Indirect Funding Provided for Addressing Each of the Five *Chesapeake 2000* Goals, Fiscal Years 1995 through 2004**



Source: GAO analysis of agency data, in constant 2004 dollars.

Despite the almost \$3.7 billion in direct funding and more than \$1.9 billion in indirect funding that has been provided for activities to restore the bay, the Chesapeake Bay Commission estimated in a January 2003 report that the restoration effort faced a funding gap of nearly \$13 billion to achieve the goals outlined in *Chesapeake 2000* by 2010. Subsequently, in an October 2004 report, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Blue Ribbon Finance Panel estimated that the restoration effort is grossly underfunded and recommended that a regional financing authority be created with an initial

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capitalization of \$15 billion, of which \$12 billion would come from the federal government.<sup>6</sup>

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## The Bay Program Has Not Always Effectively Coordinated and Managed the Restoration Effort

*Chesapeake 2000* and prior agreements have provided the overall direction for the restoration effort over the past two decades. Although *Chesapeake 2000* provides the current vision and overall strategic goals for the restoration effort, along with short- and long-term commitments, we found that the Bay Program lacked a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that could provide a road map for accomplishing the goals outlined in the agreement.

In 2003, the Bay Program recognized that it could not effectively manage all 102 commitments outlined in *Chesapeake 2000* and adopted 10 keystone commitments as a management strategy to focus the partners' efforts. To achieve these 10 keystone commitments, the Bay Program had developed numerous planning documents. However, we found that these planning documents were not always consistent with each other. For example, the program developed a strategy for restoring 25,000 acres of wetlands by 2010. Subsequently, each state within the bay watershed and the District of Columbia developed tributary strategies that described actions for restoring over 200,000 acres of wetlands—far exceeding the 25,000 acres that the Bay Program had developed strategies for restoring. While we recognize that partners should have the freedom to develop higher targets than established by the Bay Program, we are concerned that having such varying targets could cause confusion, not only for the partners, but for other stakeholders about what actions are really needed to restore the bay, and such varying targets appear to contradict the effort's guiding strategy of taking a cooperative approach to achieving the restoration goals.

We also found that the Bay Program had devoted a significant amount of their limited resources to developing strategies that were either not being used by the Bay Program or were believed to be unachievable within the 2010 time frame. For example, the program invested significant resources to develop a detailed toxics work plan for achieving the toxics

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<sup>6</sup>The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Blue Ribbon Finance Panel was established to identify funding sources sufficient to implement basinwide cleanup plans so that the bay and tidal tributaries would be restored sufficiently by 2010 to remove them from the list of impaired waters under the Clean Water Act. The panel was composed of 15 leaders from the private sector, government, and the environmental community.

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commitments in *Chesapeake 2000*. Even though the Bay Program had not been able to implement this work plan because personnel and funding had been unavailable, program officials told us that the plan was being revised. It is unclear to us why the program is investing additional resources to revise a plan for which the necessary implementation resources are not available, and which is not one of the 10 keystone commitments.

According to a Bay Program official, strategies are often developed without knowing what level of resources will be available to implement them. While the program knows how much each partner has agreed to provide for the upcoming year, the amount of funding that partners will provide in the future is not always known. Without knowing what funding will be available, the Bay Program is limited in its ability to target and direct funding toward those restoration activities that will be the most cost effective and beneficial.

The Chesapeake Bay Program Office recognizes that some of the plans are inconsistent and unachievable. The office told us that it was determining how to reconcile the program's various plans and stated that these plans were developed to identify what actions will be needed to achieve the commitments of *Chesapeake 2000* and were not developed considering available resources. The office also recognizes that there is a fundamental gap between what needs to be done to achieve some of the commitments and what can be achieved within the current resources available.

According to Chesapeake Bay Program Office officials, the development of an overall implementation plan that takes into account available resources had been discussed, but that the partners could not agree on such a plan. We recommended that the Chesapeake Bay Program Office develop a comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that takes into account available resources.

In response to our recommendations, the Bay Program has taken several actions. The Chesapeake Bay Program Office is currently developing a Web-based system to link and organize the program's various planning documents. In addition, program partners adopted a funding priorities framework in October 2005 that designates three broad funding priorities—agriculture, wastewater treatment, and developed and developing lands—for accelerating the implementation of the states' tributary strategies. While these actions are important, they fall short of the comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy we recommended. The program still needs to reconcile the inconsistencies of the program's various planning documents and clearly link the 10 keystone commitments with the funding priority framework adopted by program partners. We continue to believe that the development of a

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comprehensive, coordinated implementation strategy that lays out what the program plans to accomplish and that is directly linked to the funding that is available would allow the program to move forward in a more strategic and well-coordinated manner.

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In closing, Mr. Chairman, it is well recognized that restoring the Chesapeake Bay is a massive, difficult, and complex undertaking. While the Bay Program has made significant strides, our October 2005 report documented how the success of the program has been undermined by the lack of (1) an integrated approach to measure overall progress; (2) independent and credible reporting mechanisms; and (3) coordinated implementation strategies. These deficiencies have resulted in a situation in which the Bay Program could not present a clear and accurate picture of what the restoration effort had achieved, could not effectively articulate what strategies would best further the broad restoration goals, and could not identify how limited resources should be prioritized. We are encouraged that the Bay Program is taking actions to address our recommendations because, without these actions, we do not believe the Bay Program will be able to change the status quo and move the restoration effort forward in the most cost-effective manner.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my prepared statement. I would be happy to respond to any questions that you or Members of the Subcommittee may have.

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## Contacts and Acknowledgments

For further information about this testimony, please contact Anu Mittal at (202) 512-3841. Other individuals making significant contributions to this testimony were Sherry McDonald, Assistant Director; Bart Fischer; and James Krustapentus.

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