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## Applying Baystat To Restore Chesapeake Bay

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The Chesapeake Bay Agreement was signed in 1987 by the states of Maryland, Virginia, and Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, and the Federal government, with the goal of restoring the health of Chesapeake Bay by the year 2000, primarily by realizing a 40% reduction in nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorus) loads to the bay from 1985 levels and by capping nutrient levels thereafter. The largest source of nutrient pollution to Chesapeake Bay was, and still is, from the agricultural sector, followed by human waste and storm water. Although the 2000 goal was not met, significant nutrient reductions were achieved during a time of significant population growth in the watershed. A subsequent goal has now been set to remove the Bay from the Federal list of impaired waters by 2025. Achieving this goal will require considerable additional nutrient pollution reductions from all major sectors. In order to meet the new 2025 goal, and following the principles of adaptive management, Maryland's current Governor O'Malley established "BayStat" in 2007. The purpose of BayStat is to transparently review Bay restoration progress on a monthly basis, relentlessly assess the effectiveness of nutrient reduction programs from all sectors, and consider changes to increase their efficiency. The Governor personally convenes most meetings that consist of the relevant agency Secretaries and top scientists. The focus of BayStat has largely been on ensuring that upgrades to waste water treatment plants are progressing, agricultural best management practices are effectively marketed and well targeted, land conservation programs are prioritized, and natural resources such as planting trees and restoring oysters are significantly enhanced. Targeting funds to the most effective and efficient practices is also consistently reviewed in BayStat. Maryland State agencies have met to discuss these issues on a regular basis since the initiation of the formal Chesapeake Bay restoration effort in 1987. What is primarily different about the BayStat process is the involvement of the Governor and senior administration officials who can listen to agency perspectives and advice from technical experts, and then make a decision on the best path forward. The monthly assessments and decisions are also posted on a public-friendly website for transparent review. One of the major results of the BayStat process has been the implementation of "2-Year Milestones": interim and measureable Bay Restoration goals for which the current administration must hold itself accountable, versus setting a goal far into the future to be met by a future administration. Through the BayStat process, scientists are

actively analyzing the improving areas to hopefully find key nutrient reduction practices that can be replicated throughout the region.