

**For Immediate Release**

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**Coalition for an Affordable Bay Solution Says  
Neither Environment nor Public Can Afford Status Quo Approach  
to Nutrient Reduction in Chesapeake Bay Watershed**

**MANHEIM, Pa. – (April 27, 2015)** – Senator Elder Vogel (R-47) recently introduced Senate Bill (SB) 724 as part of his continued effort to relieve the burden on taxpayers for expenses associated with mitigating pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. The proposed legislation would initiate a transparent competitive bidding program in which the Commonwealth would only pay for actual verified nutrient reductions after they have been approved by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection.

After decades of failed efforts and billions of taxpayer dollars, Pennsylvania finds itself in default on its 2013 Chesapeake Bay compliance targets and faces the very real potential of a far larger default by 2017.

“SB 724 addresses two critical issues that opponents of the proposed legislation are ignoring,” said Ed Schafer, former U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and current chairman of the Coalition for an Affordable Bay Solution. “First are the monumental Chesapeake Bay compliance costs to Pennsylvania taxpayers that have resulted from outdated spending practices. Second is the failure to effectively reduce nitrogen and other nutrient runoff from the Chesapeake Bay.”

SB 724 is based upon the recommendations in the 2013 Pennsylvania Legislative Budget & Finance Committee (LBFC) study. Funding for the bi-partisan LBFC study was included in the Commonwealth’s 2012 budget to determine whether the adoption of a competitive bidding program would reduce the cost of compliance with the Chesapeake Bay mandate. The LBFC study recommended that a transparent, competitive bidding program limited to verified nutrient credits be implemented to replace the decades-old sector allocation approach. The study projected potential cost reductions of 80 percent or up to \$1.5 billion annually for Pennsylvania taxpayers by 2025.

Two separate independent reports – an EPA Region III Technical Memorandum and the Chesapeake Bay Scientific Technical Assessment Committee report “An Economic Study of Nutrient Credit Trading for the Chesapeake Bay” – concluded that hundreds of millions of dollars spent on modeled Best Management Practice (BMP) to effect nutrient reduction have only delivered 50 percent (at most) of the modeled reductions. Pennsylvania farmers have made significant contributions, but the current, less-effective system doesn’t reflect their efforts.

“Competitive bidding is the very process government at all levels nationally uses to procure the vast majority of its commodities since it provides transparency and ensures against taxpayer abuse,” Schafer pointed out. “Opponents have labeled the proposed competitive bidding program as a ‘rigged system’ even though the legislation requires that the program be consistent with the Commonwealth’s Procurement Code. A ‘stay the course’ strategy of continuing the existing broken system is an option that neither the public nor the environment can afford.”

For more information on the Coalition for an Affordable Bay Solution, please visit [AffordableBaySolutions.org](http://AffordableBaySolutions.org).

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