



For Immediate Release

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**Chesapeake Legal Alliance & Waterkeepers® Chesapeake Work Together for
Stronger Local Clean Water Protections**

(Annapolis, MD) Today, Chesapeake Legal Alliance (CLA) and Waterkeepers® Chesapeake Inc. -- an organization that coordinated activities of sixteen independent Waterkeeper® member organizations serving the Chesapeake Bay region -- announced a new arrangement to meaningfully strengthen the protection of clean water and the advancement of environmental justice across the watershed.

Going forward, CLA will provide direct administrative and policy support to help coordinate the work of the regional Waterkeepers organizations. CLA will do this through a new entity to be known as "Waterkeepers® Chesapeake" or "WKC." The Waterkeeper organizations themselves will remain independent of CLA. CLA will implement WKC as a separate program alongside CLA's existing Environmental Action, Legal Education, and Pro Bono & Outreach Centers.

In past years, CLA and Waterkeeper organizations have worked together on a number of major initiatives. Some of the most impactful included the passage of major water pollution control law improvements in Maryland and Virginia; the historic settlement in the 50-year federal license for Conowingo Dam and commitment to prevent release of pollutants currently built-up behind the Dam; and settlements that provided millions of dollars to support impacted communities in cases involving Baltimore's wastewater treatment plants (with Baltimore Harbor Waterkeeper) and the Ridgely's Reserve development (with Gunpowder Riverkeeper).

“This new structure will continue the vision and mission of the historic Waterkeepers Chesapeake Inc. program and strengthen it. It thus will further strengthen CLA’s work with Waterkeepers as we also continue to work with other organizations and individuals,” said David Reed, Executive Director of Chesapeake Legal Alliance. “Right now, protecting wetlands, waterways, and the health of local communities has fallen largely to the states and citizen organizations such as the independent regional Waterkeepers organizations in the Chesapeake Bay region. CLA has been pleased to provide considerable pro bono legal support to residents, community and conservation groups, sportsmen, and other conservation organizations, including our regional Waterkeepers. We will continue to successfully meet that challenge for all of our clients.”

Matt Henjum will be the [new Director](#) of WKC. He replaces Robin Broder, who retired this summer. Matt brings more than sixteen years of experience working on environmental law, policy, and litigation issues as an attorney with the federal government and as a Senior Staff Attorney with Chesapeake Legal Alliance. “It will be a privilege to support our Waterkeepers and help make the most of this new arrangement with CLA,” said Matt. “The new program will bolster clean water advocacy and enforcement for the entire region. We will connect the Chesapeake’s 16 established Waterkeeper members’ local, on-the-water action, monitoring data, and community engagement with CLA’s powerful legal and policy advocacy, strengthening the advocacy capacity for local Waterkeepers to amplify their impact and hold polluters accountable.”

“This arrangement will make CLA and regional Waterkeeper groups more impactful.” said Ben Scheelk, Board Chair of Waterkeepers Chesapeake Inc. “The need could not be more pressing as the threats to clean water multiply and continue to increase in scope and severity. As we wind-down Waterkeepers Chesapeake, Inc., I look forward to joining the Board of the Chesapeake Legal Alliance.”