

This year's cohort is the second since the program's expansion to include climate work and since its official name change to the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps. The expansion came from the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022, passed by the Maryland General Assembly, and provides the Corps with an additional \$1.5 million per year starting with the 2023-2024 class who graduated today. These funds increase the cohort size, boost the stipend for Corps members, and expand the program's scope to cover a wider range of climate topics.

"The growth of the Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps is an investment in the people who will ensure the future health of our State," said **Maryland Energy Administration Director Paul Pinsky**, who was the lead author of the Climate Solutions Now Act of 2022 when he represented District 22 in the Maryland State Senate. "Corps alumni continue to have a measurable impact in protecting our natural resources and I am confident the 15th class will build on this progress to further mitigate effects of climate change and influence policies and practices that protect our environment."

During their year of service, Corps participants collaborate directly with their host organizations to gain valuable on-the-job experience as they work to advance environmental conservation, K-12 education, energy efficiency programs and other climate resiliency goals, sustainable agriculture practices, and a host of other environmentally focused initiatives. With the expanded focus on climate, Corps members' work will also include clean and renewable energy technologies, energy efficiency, climate adaptation activities specifically in communities disproportionately affected by climate impacts, mitigating health impacts of climate change in underserved communities, and much more. In addition to this real-world experience, the Chesapeake Bay Trust provides professional development and service-learning opportunities including grant writing and project management.

"Corps members gain valuable personal and professional experience through the program as well as provide critical support to nonprofit and government agencies to help address the environmental issues affecting Maryland," said **Secretary of the Department of Natural Resources Josh Kurtz**. "This 15th class will be instrumental to our work to protect the environment across the Chesapeake region."

Funds for the program are provided by the State of Maryland, the Chesapeake Bay Trust (supported by the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays vehicular license plate program referenced as the "bay plate", a state income tax checkoff, and other sources), the Maryland Department of Natural Resources, and Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE): An Exelon Company.

"The Corps illustrates a long-term solution for the health of our environment and communities," said **Dr. Jana Davis, president of the Chesapeake Bay Trust**. "These incredible young environmentalists are implementing practices, finding new solutions, changing behaviors, and preserving our natural resources to revitalize and strengthen communities, many of which have been historically excluded and underserved, ensuring we all benefit from a clean, green, and healthy Maryland."

The 2024-25 Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps participants will serve this year in Anne Arundel County, Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Calvert County, Charles County, Frederick County, Harford County, Howard County, Montgomery County, Prince George's County, St. Mary's County, Talbot County, Washington County and Worcester County.

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About the Chesapeake Bay Trust

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) envisions a restored, protected, and resilient Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. The Trust empowers about 400 local community-based groups each year with the resources they need to take on a meaningful and measurable role in restoring forests, streams, rivers, bays, wildlife, and more in their own communities. The Trust is supported by the sale of the Chesapeake & Coastal Bay license plate; donations to the Chesapeake Bay and Endangered Species Fund on the Maryland State income tax form; donations made by hunters, fishers, and boaters in the Maryland online natural resource licensing system; donations from individuals and corporations; and partnerships with private foundations and federal, state, and local governments. The Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades. On average, 90 cents of every dollar are directed to the Trust's restoration and education programs.