



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 17, 2025

FOR INFORMATION CONTACT:

Celia Parker, Chesapeake Bay Trust: cparker@cbtrust.org, (410) 974-2941 x142

Chesapeake Bay Trust Announces New Board of Trustees Leadership Including Alexander Núñez, Esq. as Chairman of the Board

Annapolis, Maryland – The Chesapeake Bay Trust kicks off its new fiscal year with a large number of new incoming Board of Trustees members and new Board leadership. Alexander Núñez, Esq. currently Senior Vice President of Governmental, Regulatory, and External Affairs for Baltimore Gas and Electric (BGE), has been named Chairman of the Chesapeake Bay Trust (Bay Trust) Board of Trustees and Coretta Bennett, Senior Director of Operations, Design and Construction with Johns Hopkins University Facilities and Real Estate, has been named Vice Chair. Núñez succeeds Applearc Senior Managing Director, Joe Farren. Farren served on the Board from 2016-2025 and will remain connected to the Bay Trust through its official group of influential board alumni.

Núñez, who was appointed to the Bay Trust Board of Trustees in 2020, brings with him 24 years of experience from his work at BGE, including multiple executive positions, and several additional years of experience working for the Maryland General Assembly, where he served as Committee Counsel for the Senate Finance Committee. He currently serves in leadership positions in several other nonprofit and business organizations, including the Walters Art Museum, the Maryland Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Maryland Tech Council, and the Baltimore Chapter of the Association of Latino Professionals for America.

“I love the Bay Trust’s mission to empower local organizations and teams to lead meaningful on-the-ground restoration and education initiatives for their own communities,” said Núñez. “I am honored to lead the Board of Trustees and committed to propelling this vital work forward, continuing to work with Bay Trust leadership and staff to ensure all of our communities have access to healthy and vibrant natural resources for generations to come.”

Succeeding Núñez as Vice Chair is Baltimore native Coretta Bennett, who previously served as Secretary for the Board. Bennett has brought her years of experience in operations, construction, sustainability, and renewable energy to the Bay Trust. This expertise is particularly visible in the organization’s new net zero energy, net zero stormwater green headquarters, www.cbtrust.org/green-headquarters, unveiled in May.

“The Bay Trust uniquely empowers people across our region to take local action to promote the sustainability and well-being of their own communities,” said Bennett. “I’m honored to step into this role as Vice Chair to support this mission with my fellow Trustees.”

Succeeding Bennett as Secretary is Matthew Rowe, Deputy Director of the Maryland Department of the Environment's Water and Science Administration. Brian Hart, Senior Director at Gartner, will continue as Treasurer.

Five new Governor-appointed Trustees also join the 2025-2026 cohort:

- J. Robert "Bob" Frazee is the President and CEO of J. R. Frazee Strategic Consulting, LLC. Bob has specialized in topics related to banking, finance, and agriculture through his career, and was the long-time CEO of MidAtlantic Farm Credit.
- Sona Gandhi is the Director of Economic Impact at Johns Hopkins University & Medicine. She has applied her expertise in microfinance, management, and investment banking to entrepreneurs and small businesses in marginalized communities around the world.
- Allan D. House has more than 30 years of investment experience, now with Graystone Consulting from Morgan Stanley.
- Sonal Ram is Vice President, Regional Practice Leader for Water Resources at KCI Technologies, Inc. and is the former long-term Director of the Office of Environmental Design at the Maryland State Highway Administration, with extensive experience in leading large environmental programs across the state.
- Ava Richardson is the Director of the Baltimore City's Office of Sustainability. She specializes in leading public health initiatives and programs at the intersection of climate equity, environmental sustainability, and community resilience.

"The Bay Trust is fortunate to have this depth of knowledge and passion for healthy natural resources and local communities on our Board of Trustees," said Chesapeake Bay Trust president, Dr. Jana Davis. "The combined expertise will ensure we continue to empower everyday people to lead local restoration and education projects that promote the health and sustainability of all our communities."

More information about the Board of Trustees can be found on the Bay Trust website here:

<https://cbtrust.org/leadership/>

###

About the Chesapeake Bay Trust and its voluntary leadership team (Board of Trustees and Councilmembers)

The Chesapeake Bay Trust (www.cbtrust.org) envisions a restored and protected Chesapeake Bay watershed and other natural resources in our area, from the Coastal Bays to the Chesapeake to the Youghiogheny River. We empower local community-based groups on the ground 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. Every year, the Bay Trust empowers about 400 groups by providing grants and technical assistance to accomplish environmental education, community outreach, and local watershed restoration projects. The Bay Trust is supported by the sale of the Protect the Chesapeake & Coastal Bays 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 Bay Trust has received the highest rating from Charity Navigator for over two decades. On average, 90 cents of every dollar are directed to the Bay Trust's restoration and education programs.

The 2025-2026 volunteer leadership group consists of fourteen Trustees appointed by the Governor; two ex-officio Trustees of the State General Assembly named by the Senate President and Speaker of the House; designees of the Secretaries of the Maryland Departments of Natural Resources, Environment, and Agriculture; and six Councilmembers.

Returning Governor-appointed leadership members include Astrid Caldas, Ph.D., Union of Concerned Scientists; Christopher M. Corchiarino, Esq., Queen Anne's County Commissioner; Henry H. Hopkins, Esq., T. Rowe Price (Retired); Jeffrey A. Mason, TEKSystems; Vernice Miller-Travis, Metropolitan Group; and Dave Nemazie, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science. Returning Ex Officio Trustees include The Honorable Pamela Beidle, Maryland State Senate; The Honorable David Fraser-Hidalgo, Maryland House of Delegates; Jason Keppler, Maryland Department of Agriculture; and Josh Kurtz, Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Returning Councilmembers include Beth Caro, Auto Tag Connect, LLC; Thomas C. Ervin, The Snyder-Ervin Group; F. Carter Heim, HeimLantz, P.C.; John Heintz, Blank Rome, LLP; Dr. Rhonda Jeter, Bowie State University; and Dr. Mozella Williams, West Cecil Health Center.