



Remarks of DRBC Executive Director Steve Tambini, P.E., regarding the completion of the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP)

On behalf of the Delaware River Basin Commission, I would like to first thank and congratulate PDE, our federal, state and local Estuary partners, and all stakeholders throughout the Delaware River Basin. Your hard work and expertise to inform and complete the revised CCMP for the Delaware Estuary was invaluable. The plan provides an updated roadmap to meet the significant challenges that face this unique and magnificent water resource and its diverse watersheds.

We at DRBC, and all of you, have been working for many years to protect and improve our shared waters. While we have come a long way, there is always more to do. Working with limited resources has always been the reality, but we can now better focus those resources thanks to the CCMP's cleaner, stronger, and healthier goals and strategies that allow us to identify issues based upon science; prioritize the most critical needs; and produce measurable outcomes.

The CCMP's clean water goals of reducing pollution to improve water quality are important to DRBC and all Estuary partners. The combination of the DRBC Comprehensive Plan and the CCMP have led and will continue to lead the path towards continued water quality improvement. Collectively, through science, planning, regulation and infrastructure investment, we have significantly improved levels of dissolved oxygen in portions of the Estuary which once were considered "dead" zones. But again, we know there is more work to do. The CCMP's ***Clean Water Goal No. 1 – Reduce Nutrient Pollution and its Impacts*** highlights focused strategies to reduce pollution from nutrients such as: requiring ammonia removal from wastewater dischargers; implementing innovative green infrastructure tools; and promoting stormwater BMPs for residents, municipalities and the agricultural community. Further, ***Clean Water Goal No. 2 – Reduce other Pollutants and their Impacts*** identifies the need for better understanding to address non-conventional, emerging and toxic pollutants in the Estuary. DRBC's programs to track down and reduce PCBs have been successful; however, technology and science continue to give of a better understanding of what else may be in our waters.

The CCMP's ***Clean Water Goal No. 3 – Sustain Flow for Drinking Water and Ecosystems*** recognizes that an adequate supply of freshwater is needed for public drinking water for millions of people, groundwater recharge and industrial needs. An adequate balance of freshwater and salt water in the Estuary is also critical for its ecological health. As many of you know, there are no dams on the Delaware River that prevent ocean saltwater from impacting the upstream river, making the Delaware Estuary a complex and connected salt water, brackish water and freshwater ecosystem. The challenges of a changing climate, the threat of rising seas, and the expected future changes in temperatures and precipitation will impact this salt water / freshwater interface.

The CCMP is so much more than the three clean water goals that I touched upon. Managing water resources in the Delaware River Estuary is endlessly complex. The Clean Water Act provided national goals to achieve fishable and swimmable waters, but how to achieve these goals is not a cookie-cutter exercise. In our Basin, we can be very proud of our shared successes to improve water quality in our Estuary. We see the results in improved aquatic habitats and natural systems, improved fish consumption advisories and a resurgence back to the water as a place to live, start a business or recreate. But as our understanding increases, new challenges continually emerge. To address these challenges, it is important that we set new and higher goals and find new strategies for achieving them. The revised CCMP provides a vision, measurable goals and a dynamic plan towards a cleaner, more resilient and healthier Estuary. The DRBC has been proud to contribute to the revised plan and to our shared successes in this Estuary...our Estuary. And, we are deeply committed to working with our PDE, federal, state and local partners throughout the Basin in its implementation.