

Name _____

Date _____

Letter to Students

Dear students,

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is a unique place in the world. As a coastal estuary, it is home to diverse wildlife and provides a beautiful place for many people to live. Recently, however, concerned citizens have brought to our attention issues around water quality. Frequent algal blooms are occurring in some areas, suggesting habitat loss to some organisms and even dead zones where no organisms can live. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is home to many plants and animals that we care about—the blue crab, the striped bass, and oysters, to name a few. When algal blooms occur, sunlight cannot reach bay grasses for photosynthesis. These grasses grow under the water and provide important homes and nesting grounds for organisms such as the blue crab and fish. If the grasses cannot survive, the animals will need to relocate or they will die out.

In addition to the grasses that grow, and animals that live in the Chesapeake Bay, people enjoy the Chesapeake Bay estuary for fishing, swimming, boating, hygiene, and even drinking water. If water quality is declining in certain areas, we need to address the cause of the problems as soon as possible.

We have a plan to address declining water quality, but we need your help with making a decision about where best to put this plan in place. While you may not understand everything in the plan right now, we want you to help us review the data that has been collected by scientists and citizen scientists in different locations in the Chesapeake Bay. In doing so, you will learn more about the details of the action plan. We are providing FieldScope maps and data about six sites within the bay: Annapolis, Maryland; Havre de Grace, Maryland; Scotland, Maryland; Alexandria, Virginia; Jamestown, Virginia; and Norfolk, Virginia. Using this information, we would like you to decide which is the best location for implementing our plan. When you present your decision to us, we would like you to include data you gather from FieldScope along with your reasons for selecting that particular site. Please be thorough in making your decision and consider the stakeholders as well as the consequences of putting the action plan in place.

Sincerely,

Mr. Klene, Chesapeake Bay Watershed Task Force Member