The business community has a unique opportunity to help lead in the restoration and protection of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. In early 2016, the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay (Alliance) will launch a new Businesses for the Bay (B4B), an innovative business partnership and membership-based program, to help address the needs of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The B4B mission is to encourage businesses within the Chesapeake Bay watershed to take voluntary and measurable actions to support protection and restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and help the public understand the valuable role of the business community in sustaining the health of the watershed. Through this new business partnership, the Alliance and its business partners hope to create tangible change in the watershed while raising the profile of businesses who make contributions to stewardship of the Bay and its rivers.

**B4B Program Highlights**

- **Engaging Large and Small Businesses:** B4B will include a diverse mix of members from large corporations to local businesses, throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Alliance recognizes that needs vary based on both the size and nature of a business. Tailoring support to the needs of different types of businesses may be needed to maximize the number and diversity of members.

- **Establishing a Pledge of Business Commitment to the Bay:** B4B starts with a common commitment. B4B will be a membership association – by business, for business.

- **Providing a Network for the Voice of Business:** Communication among business, policy makers, and environmental groups and sharing best practices will strengthen collaboration.

- **Linking Business Actions to Watershed Goals:** The 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (Agreement) lays out a comprehensive set of goals and outcomes that will guide watershed restoration efforts for the coming decade. The actions businesses take uniquely correlate to the Agreement, providing a regional context for accomplishments.

- **Regulatory Compliance & Voluntary Actions:** B4B members must be in compliance with any and all applicable environmental regulations, permits, or other legal requirements. B4B members commit to voluntary actions beyond compliance.

- **Increasing Employee Awareness and Engagement:** Information, educational resources, and volunteer projects allow employees to become more familiar with watershed issues and take part in causes that are important to a company and its community.
Examples of B4B Membership Benefits

- Public recognition for protecting the Chesapeake Bay
- Inclusion in press releases and the B4B Annual Report
- Use of B4B logo and stickers
- Invitations to B4B members-only networking forums and online communities
- Support and project guidance
- Discounts to Alliance and B4B events
- Access to programs that engage employees

Next Steps

- **Early October 2015**: Finalize tiered B4B membership levels and benefits
- **Mid-October 2015**: B4B application beta-testing
- **November 2015 Kick-Off Meeting**: The Alliance will officially kick-off the B4B program on November 10, 2015 from 11:00am-4:00pm at the Bond Street Wharf Building in Baltimore, MD with the “Linking Businesses to the Chesapeake Bay: B4B Kick-Off Meeting”. All are welcome to join us to learn more about business sustainability programs and how they link with the Bay restoration effort. Nicholas DiPasquale (Director of the Chesapeake Bay Program Office), business leaders, and others will come together to share successes and challenges ahead. The final agenda and registration info are coming soon.
- **December 2015**: Finalize and launch the new B4B website: http://businesses.allianceforthebay.org/
- **January 2016**: B4B membership application goes live
- **February 2016**: Right now, all B4B Steering Committee members are from Virginia. We will open the Steering Committee up to other business representatives this winter.

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