



OFFICE OF WETLANDS, OCEANS AND WATERSHEDS

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

November 29, 2023

Dear Bill and the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership Team:

Thank you for your efforts to develop the equity strategy for the Albemarle-Pamlico National Estuary Partnership. We recognize that equity considerations are familiar to the National Estuary Program (NEP) and appreciate the thought and attention to detail your NEP has shown to further advance the national goal of equity. We hope you will find the document useful over the life of your Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funding and beyond.

The [National Estuary Program Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding Implementation Memorandum for Fiscal Years 2022-2026](#), signed by Assistant Administrator Radhika Fox on July 26, 2022, outlines the EPA's expectations for the National Estuary Program and provides guidance on uses of funds, timeframes, how to award the funds, and tracking and reporting requirements for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL).

The memo requires each NEP to submit "a strategy detailing how the NEP will contribute to the national program-wide goal of ensuring that at least 40% of the benefits and investments from BIL funding flow to disadvantaged communities... The purpose of the equity strategy is to ensure that each NEP is reviewing potential projects and utilization of BIL funds through the lens of equitable and fair access to the benefits of environmental programs for all individuals. The equity strategy should outline how BIL funds will be utilized to increase investments in disadvantaged communities and the benefits that flow to them."

After careful review, the EPA has approved your equity strategy for the purpose of waiving the non-federal match requirement outlined in Section 320 of the Clean Water Act. This letter serves as documentation of this decision for the remaining years of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding, and no additional updates are needed to waive the non-federal match requirement for FY 24 - FY 26 grants. Please retain a copy of this approval letter for your files. The EPA will also attach a copy of this letter to any funding recommendations for your NEP's remaining Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grants.

We look forward to learning more about your successes as you continue to implement your Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Brian Frazer, Director
Office of Wetlands, Oceans and Watersheds