Conclusions and Recommendations

Historically, Virginia’s working waterfronts have been the portal for commerce and trade to the rest of the world and have supported regional commerce and recreational activity for much of eastern Virginia. Working waterfronts have been the heart of Tidewater Virginia culture. Today citizens and business alike are still attracted to our shorelines for the superb quality of life and amenities that coastal Virginia offers. Working waterfronts in Virginia play an important role in supporting Virginia’s and the nation’s economy and naval operations. In 2014 alone, six marine related industries in Virginia generated 122,000 jobs and over $4.9 billion in wages contributing $8.5 billion to Virginia’s gross domestic product. These marine industries touch the everyday lives of most Virginians. The Port of Virginia is one of the nation’s largest ports where Virginia’s merchandise is exported worldwide and imports arrive from distant countries.

Approximately 600 working waterfronts in the four coastal Virginia Planning Districts provide valuable access to the navigable waters of Virginia. These facilities support almost every type of marine dependent activity. Recreational boaters and local citizens use these facilities to gain access to the adjacent waters. Commercial fishing operations large and small depend upon these facilities for their livelihood. Marine research and marine habitat organizations operate from these facilities. Boat and ship building, repair and maintenance operations on our waterfronts are some of Virginia’s largest employers. Virginia’s ports transport goods throughout the Bay and to ports worldwide. The largest naval facility in the world is based in Hampton Roads. Virginia’s working waterfronts are essential to the everyday life of all Virginians and most citizens of the east coast of the US.

Working waterfronts are currently under increasing pressures from a variety of sources that threaten their existence. Natural factors of sea-level rise, subsidence, global warming causing more frequent and severe weather events, and shoaling of the channels leading to our navigable waters threatens the future existence and viability of our working waterfronts. Changing global economic forces and markets continue to shift economic activity away from Virginia’s waterfronts to other locations in the US and worldwide. The historic decline in numerous Chesapeake Bay fisheries has been directly linked to a decline in water quality. This loss of habitat supporting our commercial shellfish and finfish populations has reduced the demand for commercial fishing facilities located on the waterfront. With expanding population and associated development throughout the Chesapeake Bay watershed, the challenge will be maintaining high water quality levels sustaining our fisheries and commercial fishing operations. With the decline in fisheries there has been a corresponding decline in fisherman willing to work the waters. With limited opportunities for new commercial fishing ventures the existing workforce is getting older with fewer younger workers willing to take up the profession.
When water dependent facilities go idle they are often redeveloped to less intense uses reflecting a more residential character. The conversion of the waterfront to residential use often results in conflicts between the residential users and traditional marine commercial uses. State and local policies in Virginia often are not directed at the preservation or redevelopment of our working waterfronts. Even the lack of adequate succession planning on the part of owners of marine related businesses has resulted in the conversion of our working waterfronts. All of these conditions have led to conversion over time of prime waterfront real estate from working waterfronts to uses that discourage or prohibit the continued commercial use of the waterfront and adjacent waterways.

Our working waterfronts have shown amazing resilience over time even given the many threats and changing economic conditions. The future of working waterfronts is hard to predict but we can be assured that new economic opportunities such as off shore energy generation will necessitate that working waterfronts adapt to these conditions. If no actions are taken in the near-term the obstacles to redevelopment of working waterfronts may be insurmountable. This will result in a shift of economic opportunities elsewhere. The future of coastal Virginia and all of Virginia is tied to the vitality of our waterways. Actions now will ensure that working waterways are viable for generations to come.

**Problem:** Virginia faces the loss of or threat to traditional land and water resources, working waterfronts that support business activity dependent on tidal water access

**Causes of Problem:**

1. Natural – sea level rise, subsidence, global warming (increased threat of heightened natural disasters), channel siltation, shoreline erosion, water quality
2. Changing economic conditions and global competition
3. Land/water use conflicts
4. Inadequate institutional structures – governmental policies that pose barriers or do not adequately support working waterfront development – direct and indirect

Actions to address the preservation of working waterways in Virginia need to span all levels of government, federal, state, regional and local. In addition there are actions that the private sector and individual property owners can take that will help preserve these important assets. The actions need to address the natural, economic and institutional threats to the waterways. The range of policy options available at each level of government includes planning and general policy declarations, fiscal policies, regulatory policies, developmental incentives and developmental institutions, education and research and data analysis. The following is a brief discussion of the most apparent policy options available at each level of governmental action - federal, state, regional, local and non-government.
### FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- The federal government has played a leading role in highlighting the importance of working waterfronts on a national level and encouraging action by states and local governments to develop policies for the continued operation of these assets. NOAA and the Coastal Program have provided significant information and initial funding highlighting the importance of our working waterfronts and threats to working waterfronts. Additionally, these organizations have showcased case studies of preservation efforts and established networks where preservation experiences can be shared. There have been efforts over the years led by the Maine legislative delegation to provide direct federal funding for the acquisition and development of select working waterfronts. Virginia’s former First District Congresswoman, Jo Ann Davis, introduced HR 2565, Working Waterfront Preservation Act of 2007. Congressman Wittman is currently a co-patron on HR 5277, Keep America’s Waterfronts Working Act. Congress is encouraged to consider enactment of this type of legislation in the future as the threat to working waterfronts continues to increase.

The Army Corps of Engineers has traditionally been responsible for dredging of the channels of navigable waters to ensure that they are able to accommodate commercial activity on our waterways. As federal resources have diminished over the years Congress eliminated funding to the Corps for the dredging of smaller waterways that are used by watermen and commercial fishing boats. The future of our smaller working waterfronts depends on these channels being kept open. If the Corps is unable to fund these channel-dredging operations, Congress should consider creating a cost-sharing program with state and local governments to dredge priority channels.
**Virginia State Government** – Virginia has a large role in providing not only the tools for local governments to help preserve working waterfronts but providing the necessary funding for the improvement of those waterfront facilities. Virginia can also help working waterfront businesses flourish by establishing a friendly regulatory environment for their operation.

While several state agencies historically have supported the development of working waterfronts and communities, there has not been a program specifically devoted to working waterfront preservation and development. The General Assembly should consider enactment of a working waterfront preservation program similar to legislation that has been enacted in Maine. There are three main additional areas where Virginia State government can assist in the preservation of working waterfronts: 1) the creation of funding sources for the development of working waterfronts and the dredging of small harbor channels, 2) enabling localities to provide tax and regulatory relief for working waterfront businesses and 3) providing incentives directly to property owners that preserve working waterfronts.

**State funding of working waterfront improvements and channel dredging**

The state could reinstitute the dedication of sales tax on marine motor fuels to working waterfront preservation and development. There are other marine related taxes and fees that could also be authorized for use, in part, for working waterfront development or small harbor dredging. These include the funds in the marine fisheries license fees deposited in the Virginia Marine Products Fund and the salt water fishing license fees deposited in the Virginia Saltwater Recreational Fishing Development Fund.

In addition to state funding from existing taxes and fees, the state could establish a priority for working waterfront development in the administration of a host of existing grants administered by state agencies. Transportation Alternatives Program, VDOT’s HB2 funding, Community Development Block Grants, Clean Water Grants, Port and Harbor Improvement Grants are just a few examples of potential grant sources that could be taped to preserve or redevelop working waterfront areas. State agencies should be encouraged to adjust their guidelines for grant administration to specifically include working waterfront development as a priority activity.

The Port of Virginia is in the process of planning and construction of major improvements to its facilities that will maintain the Port’s competitive position with other ports on the east coast. In addition to these very significant investments, the Virginia Port Authority, in years past, has made a limited number of investments in the infrastructure of some of the smaller, publicly owned harbors and working waterfronts in coastal Virginia. The Port Authority could reinstate this program of investment in select smaller harbors thus contributing to the enhanced shipment of goods from our water fronts to market. A matching program of this nature would be able to leverage funding from a variety of other sources. Funding and investment of this type is required to improve the viability and longevity of many of our smaller working waterfronts.
Lacking federal funding for shallow channel dredging, the state should consider establishing a matching grant program for these dredging activities. Maintaining open channels in our smaller and shallower navigable waterways is critical to the survival of many marine dependent businesses. Without a reliable source of future funding numerous channels and smaller harbors throughout eastern Virginia will likely become impassable to commercial boating activity effectively closing the working waterfronts.

The General Assembly could enact a series of enabling statutes for local governments to provide additional tools for them to encourage the preservation and development of working waterfront areas. Allowing localities to designate commercial fishing boats and commercial fishing equipment as a separate class of personal property would provide an opportunity to establish a lower tax rate for these assets. Enabling localities to establish working waterfront development zones would provide an opportunity to reduce taxes and fees in these zones as well as provide special regulatory relief to spur future waterfront development or redevelopment.

The state could also provide direct incentives to waterfront landowners and/or businesses to help preserve and encourage redevelopment of privately owned working waterfront areas. Virginia has been a leader among the states in using tax policy in pursuit of preservation. Virginia’s historic tax credits and land conservation tax credits are considered a national model that has resulted in the preservation of thousands of properties statewide. A similar program could be established for the preservation of working waterfront areas. For the voluntary establishment of deed-restricted use to marine dependent activities, the state could in return provide an income tax credit to the property owner. In addition to this preservation approach, the State could offer a state income tax credit for a portion of the capital investment made at designated working waterfront areas similar to the historic tax credit approach. This would encourage reinvestment and redevelopment of working waterfront properties.

The state should expand the Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Fund to include a broader range of types of investments at our working waterfronts. The requirements that the businesses be “basic”, bringing in investment to Virginia, and that the investment be related to increasing activity through the Port of Virginia limits the applicability of this Fund for the investment in smaller harbors serving commercial marine activity. Significant investment opportunities and job creation throughout coastal Virginia could be spurred by expanding the eligibility of this program. Restructuring the Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Fund would stimulate significant direct investment and job creation at our working waterfronts.

Encouraging employers to train or retrain workers in marine dependent industries is critical to the long-term success of our marine industries. Virginia has a long history of supporting workforce development efforts when employers wish to expand their employment base. The Virginia Jobs Investment Program has a long history of supporting the training of workers in expanding businesses throughout the Commonwealth. Historically, marine related businesses
have not taken full advantage of this program. If special efforts to reach out to marine
dependent industries was initiated along with a modification of some of the eligibility criteria
for our smaller seafood and marine industries this program would be more extensively used by
businesses located at our working waterfronts.

Working waterfronts that supported our commercial shellfish and finfish industries historically
have represented a majority of working waterfronts in Virginia. With the decline of our
fisheries, our working watermen now share waterfront facilities with recreational boaters.
Today the majority of working waterfronts are oriented towards supporting recreational
boaters with many of those facilities accommodating commercial watermen as well. The long-
term viability of facilities serving commercial and recreational fishermen depend upon an
adequate supply of shellfish and finfish being caught and processed annually. The historical
decay in numerous species of shellfish and finfish has been the leading cause for the huge
decline in the number working waterfronts over the last 50 to 75 years. Not only has the
number of working waterfronts declined but also the level of activity that is carried out at these
remaining facilities declined. If the working waterfronts that support commercial fishing
operations are to continue to be viable it is imperative that our fisheries be managed in a
manner that will insure an increasing and sustainable supply of shellfish and finfish. VMRC and
VIMS are the primary Virginia agencies having responsibility for fisheries management but a
variety of state and federal agencies are tasked with maintaining the health of the Chesapeake
Bay and its tributaries. Virginia and all of its partners need to continue to increase efforts to
clean up the Bay and provide proper management of our fisheries to ensure an adequate
supply of shellfish and finfish for our commercial and recreational fishing operations.

There has been an increase in conflicts from competing uses of state tidal waters in recent
years. Competing interests from conservation, commercial fishing, recreational boating and
preservation of viewsheds have caused disagreements as to what are the best and appropriate
uses of tidal waters and adjacent lands supporting working waterfronts. As many of the
conflicts involve both the water and upland, the location of the conflict will determine how and
who helps to resolve the issue. VMRC will continue to mediate conflicts within the waterway
over State-owned submerged land through the Joint Permit Application (JPA) review process
and has a long history of addressing such use conflicts. However, local governments also have
responsibility for resolving conflicts entailing piers, docks and wharves associated with adjacent
upland use. For adjacent upland conflicts, local governments are responsible. In those cases
where local governments must act to resolve upland use conflicts and where local governments
have established concurrent authority over piers, docks and wharves and their use, the VMRC
will normally withhold action on any submerged land permits until the local government has
acted. If the long-term viability of commercial fishing is to be supported, local governments and
the VMRC should strive to define and coordinate their review procedures so that the interests
of all parties are appropriately considered in a timely an efficient manner.
With the decline of natural oyster, crab and other fish populations we have seen a decline in the number of workers associated with seafood processing from the watermen, to the wholesalers, to workers in processing facilities, to workers in retail outlets. Many of the workers in the seafood industry are getting older and retiring. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient interest or background from the younger generation to pursue a career in a declining seafood industry. Given the declines in the natural stocks of shellfish, the shellfish industry has turned to aquaculture practices to fill market demand. These newer aquaculture and advanced processing practices demand newer and higher-skilled workers. Virginia’s Community Colleges and the multiple Virginia agencies responsible for workforce development will need to develop, in cooperation with the seafood industries, tailored training programs to meet the need for workers within this changing industry.

Similarly, shipbuilding, repair and maintenance and a host of other marine related businesses are facing similar workforce development issues. Virginia’s network of workforce development programs needs to be attuned to and responsive to these challenges and provide the worker training required.

**Regional Planning and Development** – The four Planning District Commissions (PDC) of coastal Virginia have taken a leadership role in the planning and preservation of our working waterfronts. Each PDC has conducted an inventory of the working waterfronts in their region, prepared case studies on the loss of working waterfronts and assisted their member local governments in developing strategies for the preservation and redevelopment of working waterfronts. Two PDCs have established Public Access Authorities to assist with ensuring future public access to our tidal waters through the acquisition and development of waterfront properties. These regional efforts must be continued and expanded if our working waterfronts are to be preserved and redeveloped. There is additional research and planning required to quantify the threats to the priority working waterfronts and the strategies that should be deployed to ensure that these properties remain available for commercial water dependent activities. The PDCs are in a unique position to conduct this research/planning or to assist their member localities to undertake the planning required.

Given the increasing natural threats to working waterfronts from sea level rise, global warming and channel shoaling there is heightened emphasis on developing a range of options to make our communities more resilient to these threats. The PDCs in concert with their locality members and coastal partners can play an important role in facilitating test demonstrations of individual resiliency options and other strategies that will preserve working waterfronts.

The Public Access Authorities that have been created for the Middle Peninsula and Northern Neck offer a unique institutional structure for the acquisition and development of select working waterfront locations similar to the Newport News Seafood Industrial Park (SIP) model that has been in operation since 1989. The SIP is one of the nation’s premier seafood harbors owned and managed by the City. It is home to a number of seafood and other water-dependent
companies. It provides full-service accommodations to the seafood industry, including utility hook-ups and vessel fueling, service and repair. The City leases land on a long-term basis to the companies located at the SIP. The companies own the facilities built on that land. Besides land rent, the City obtains revenue from its operation of the SIP from mooring fees. Land rent brings the City more than $481,000 per year and mooring fees have totaled more than $3.8 million since they were first collected in 1989. Businesses also pay real estate property taxes, vessel taxes and machinery and tool / business property taxes to the City.

The PDCs also have had experience in administering revolving loan funds for economic development and environmental improvement projects. These financing tools have allowed economic development projects to move forward when banks have been unable to make loans with acceptable terms allowing the projects to move forward. This financing capability could be employed to encourage the development of private sector facilities and improvements to working waterfronts. The implementation of this strategy depends upon the capitalization of the regional loan funds from outside sources.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT** – Local governments in coastal Virginia have an abundant array of tools that can be used to help preserve and/or redevelop Virginia’s working waterfronts ranging from policy and planning, to taxation, to developmental incentives, to favorable regulatory treatment, to special developmental districts. The specific uses and characteristics of each working waterfront will determine the appropriate array of local tools that will help preserve or encourage the redevelopment of that particular working waterfront in that specific locality.

Many of the localities in Hampton Roads have specific references in their comprehensive plans and specific provisions within their zoning ordinances that support the continuation of commercial activity on their working waterfronts. These types of explicit policy discussions are not found in most of the plans and ordinances in our more rural localities. In order for our working waterfronts to be preserved it is important that the localities recognize the importance of the commercial activity in these areas and allow that activity to continue by right. Often, because of the residential character of the surrounding land uses working waterfront activity is treated as a non-conforming use or a use by special exception. These additional regulatory hurdles discourage the continued use or redevelopment of our working waterfronts. If a local government does not have explicit policy related to its working waterfronts it should consider adopting such policy provisions to encourage the continuation of water dependent commercial activity.

Historically, local governments have not regulated activity on the water within their territorial boundaries. Local governments, until recently, have viewed the regulation of water-based activity as the responsibility of the Commonwealth of Virginia, most notably the VMRC. The recent Supreme Court ruling in Northumberland County provided guidance on the extent of local zoning powers over activity on piers and wharfs connected to the shoreline and extending into tidal waters. The *Jennings v. Board of Supervisors of Northumberland Co.* Supreme Court
decision stated, "The primary issue now before us is whether [Northumberland] County's zoning jurisdiction extends to the regulation of commercial piers and marinas to be constructed on bottomlands that lie beyond the mean low water mark in the Commonwealth's tidal, navigable waters." In answering that question, the Court noted; a) the County's zoning authority under Va. Code Sec. §15.2-2280 extends to "the territory under its jurisdiction" but Art. 7 of Ch. 22 of Title 15.2 of the Code does not provide a rule for determining such territory; b) Va. Code Sec. 15.2-3105 states that the boundary of every locality bordering on the Chesapeake Bay, including its tidal tributaries, or the Atlantic Ocean "shall embrace all wharves, piers, docks and other structures, except bridges and tunnels..."; and c) Title 28.2 of the Va. Code gives VMRC regulatory authority over the Commonwealth's bottomlands beyond the Mean Low Waterline. Therefore, the Court said VMRC and a locality have "concurrent authority to regulate the construction of piers upon state-owned bottomlands where the pier is also 'erected along the waterfront of such locality.' Code Sec. §15.2-3105." The Court did not state that a locality has general zoning authority over all proposed uses of waters and bottomlands off its coast within its territorial boundaries. In fact, the court's decision was limited to holding that the lower court did not err in "concluding that the County's zoning authority 'embraces' the entirety of Jennings' proposed construction, even the portion that 'extends into the Chesapeake Bay[s]' tidal tributaries.'"

An Attorney General's Opinion from 2010 regarding an offshore wind project permitting dealt in a broader fashion with the question of localities asserting their zoning powers over state waters and bottomlands. The Opinion concluded, "Virginia localities do not have the authority to extend the application of their land use ordinances to state-owned submerged lands." The Opinion further stated, "Although localities in the Commonwealth may establish territorial boundaries that extend over waters of the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth retains ownership of the submerged lands under those waters." The Opinion further stated, "The General Assembly has not granted specific authority to localities to extend their land use regulations to projects located on state-owned bottomlands or the waters above them. Section §15.2-2280 does provide a locality with the authority to zone the territory under its jurisdiction, but absent a situation where the Commonwealth has conveyed ownership or control of specific areas of bottomland, submerged lands beyond the mean low water mark belong to the Commonwealth and thus are not within any locality's jurisdiction." This Opinion was in existence at the time of the Jennings decision, and the Court did not address it nor overturn it.

With increasing conflicts that have occurred between water dependent uses and adjacent waterfront residential properties, the court has determined that local governmental land use powers extend over the water in limited situations when the use is connected to the shoreline by a wharf, pier, dock or similar structure and are in addition to the powers of the State, VMRC. Given the Jennings decision by the court and the Attorney General’s guidance, each coastal locality may wish to review its zoning provisions to help resolve potential use conflicts among competing uses along the shoreline to ensure the future viability of commercial water-dependent activity.
Some local governments have taken on the responsibility of owning select waterfront areas and making them available for commercial activity. The Newport News Seafood Industrial Park (SIP) is a classic example that was discussed earlier. There are numerous areas; rights-of-ways that go to the water, public property by “right of use”, and underutilized publicly owned property, that can offer an opportunity for further development as working waterfronts. Often these areas have adjacent owners that have blocked access to or object to further commercial use of the landing or public access to these facilities. Local governments can play an important role in preserving these areas by accepting these areas, making the investments necessary for their continued use and ensuring that the local regulations support commercial use at these locations.

Localities through their taxing policies can encourage or discourage commercial marine related activity. A classic example is the personal property tax levied on boats. Some localities have had differing assessment procedures for commercial watercraft than recreational boats. Some localities have chosen to lower their personal property rates on boats to encourage their moorage in their locality. The personal property tax is but one of several taxes, real estate, Business Professional Occupation License, machinery and tools, etc., that can be adjusted to support commercial activity at working waterfronts. Localities should be encouraged to examine the full array of local taxes to support the type of development desired on their working waterfronts.

Local governments have a broad range of developmental incentive options available to encourage business development on their waterfronts. Local Enterprise Zones, Technology Zones, Community Development Authority, Tax Increment Financing and other special development districts are but a few examples of tools that can be used to fund further development along a working waterfront. Working with and through the local economic development authority, the locality can structure special incentives and financing to meet the needs of a particular development opportunity. Local governments should be encouraged to assess the development potential and desired future use of working waterfronts and structure the best set of development incentives and financing tools to encourage the desired investment.

Through thoughtful planning, local governments have broad latitude to use a host of regulatory, financing and development tools to encourage the preservation and redevelopement of their working waterfronts. The increased tax revenues and related spin-off development that can be generated from a vibrant working waterfront should be a strong incentive for localities to institute special initiatives that would stimulate increased investment along the waterfront.

**PRIVATE SECTOR** – The citizen of the Commonwealth, particularly those living in the coastal areas, benefit daily from the activities conducted at our working waterfronts but seldom do people ever consider the contribution these resources have made to their lives and thus there is not an up swell of support to take action to preserve or redevelop them. In the last couple of
years the public debate over sea level rise and the treats on natural force on our coast has heightened awareness broadly of the risks that development along our waterfronts face. This heightened awareness has yet to be translated into comprehensive approaches to preserving our most important waterfront assets including working waterfronts. Concerted efforts to educate the public and more specifically commercial waterfront property owners of the treats and options for preservation need to be undertaken to generate the public will for taking long-term development strategies. There is not likely to be the resources to preserve or protect all development at risk in hazard areas thus the public will need to be educated and engaged in a dialog about what are the critical public investments that will need to be made to ensure that working waterfronts are viable in the years to come. All levels of government and the media have a responsibility to significantly increase the education efforts to the decision makers and the public so better and more informed decisions could be made about the allocation of resource directed at working waterfront preservation.

Many of our working waterfronts are privately owned. Many of these critical commercial waterfront locations have been converted to non-commercial use because there was not a successor operator available to take over the business when the current owner retires. To avoid this situation from continuing a concerted effort should be made to reach out to existing waterfront businesses and encourage them to develop a plan for continuance of commercial activity on their property well into the future. This plan may include succession planning or dead restrictions or sale to other commercial ventures.

**Recommendations**

**FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

- Congress should adopt a national Working Waterfront Preservation Act.
- Congress should reinstate funding for the shallow channel-dredging program of the Army Corps of Engineers.
- The US Maritime Administration should designate additional America’s Marine Highway Program corridors in Virginia.
- The National Park Service should more actively promote and highlight working waterfronts along the Captain John Smith Chesapeake Bay Historic Trail.

**STATE GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

- The Virginia General Assembly should:
  - Enact a Working Waterfront Preservation Act,
  - Establish a legislative study commission with members representing a broad cross-section of stakeholder groups to review the long-term viability of Virginia’s working waterfronts,
  - Establish a shallow channel dredging matching grant program,
  - Dedicate the marine motor fuel tax and other marine related taxes/fees to working waterfront improvements,
Enable localities to establish Working Waterfront Development Areas.
Enable localities to classify commercial fishing vessels and related equipment as a separate class of personal property,
Expand the Port of Virginia Economic and Infrastructure Development Fund to include private investment at smaller commercial harbors, and
Establish a state Working Waterfront Preservation income tax credit.

- The Governor should:
  - Issue an Executive Order establishing priority for working waterfront improvements in numerous State administered grant programs – Community Development Block Grant, Transportation Alternatives Program, Clean Water, etc.,
  - Establish an advisory group to evaluate the impacts of and unintended consequences of State storm water and Chesapeake Bay Act regulations related to development at working waterfronts and recommend revisions to these regulations that will facilitate future working waterfront development/redevelopment; and
  - Charge the Commonwealth Center for Recurrent Flooding Resiliency with the long-term planning for the resiliency of select working waterfronts of regional importance.
- The VA Port Authority should expand funding for small port and harbor improvements throughout Tidewater Virginia.
- The Commonwealth should continue active fishery resource management and Chesapeake Bay cleanup programs.
- VMRC should engage stakeholders directly involved in the water conflict mediation process (currently or in the past) for feedback on the processes’ efficiencies and inefficiencies. With such feedback VMRC could consider updating their processes for resolving use conflicts on or over the Commonwealth’s tidal waters.
- The Commonwealth should establish adequate workforce development programs and facilities for the changing marine related industries.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT ACTIONS
- The coastal Planning District Commissions should:
  - Continue research and planning for the preservation and redevelopment of working waterfronts,
  - Increase technical assistance to local governments towards the preservation and redevelopment of working waterfronts,
  - Serve as the test demonstration organization/site for working waterfront preservation methods, and
Create revolving loan funds for commercial waterfront development and equipment financing.

- Use the Public Access Authorities for future acquisition and development of select working waterfront sites.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACTIONS**

- Coastal local Governments should:
  - Adopt a working waterfront policy as a part of the comprehensive plan or as an independent policy,
  - Establish permissive, by right, zoning policies for working waterfronts,
  - Establish local taxation policies that stimulate water dependent business development (personal property, real estate, BPOL, and machinery and tools taxes),
  - Review their zoning provisions that regulate shoreline uses and uses connected to the shoreline by a wharf, pier, dock or similar structure to help resolve potential use conflicts and to ensure the viability of commercial water-dependent activity,
  - Establish a set of development incentives to encourage the appropriate use of working waterfronts,
  - Invest in the development of select working waterfronts,
  - Use the appropriate development districts (EZ, Technology Zone, CDA, TIF, etc.) to achieve the desired development objectives along the working waterfront, and
  - Plan for adaptation and resiliency of public facilities along the waterfront.

**PRIVATE SECTOR ACTIONS**

- Education of the public, community leaders and decision makers on the importance of our working waterfronts to our economy and our culture.
- Conduct sufficient succession planning to ensure continuation of marine businesses.
- Plan for the resiliency of private waterfront businesses at our working waterfronts.