

The Washington Post

Letters to the Editor • Opinion

More to this river than a messy situation

May 12

The April 27 Metro article “Messy situation on popular Va. river,” with the sub-headline “Manure from chickens, cows enters Shenandoah, raising bacteria levels,” made a statement. Unfortunately, it didn’t tell the whole story.

The article failed to cover the decades of work and millions of dollars invested by farmers and taxpayers to reduce agricultural pollution. Farmers have voluntarily fenced cattle out of streams. They have taken up practices that reduce fertilizer runoff and sediment erosion. Local soil and water conservation districts, federal agencies and nonprofit organizations work hard to support and advance these efforts.

Progress depends in large part on the coordinated restoration effort that is housed in the federal Chesapeake Bay Program. Now is the time for government agencies, conservation groups, farmers and the agriculture industry to work together to address this situation. It requires commitment at every level and federal leadership to maintain the momentum.

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