

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

Chairman Ken Calvert  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Ranking Member Betty McCollum  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2015

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

As Members of Congress with an interest in the Chesapeake Bay and the rivers and streams that feed it, we thank the Subcommittee for its past leadership in the extraordinary effort to restore the Chesapeake Bay. Chesapeake Bay states are investing in a Blueprint to restore this national treasure to its place as one of the most productive estuaries in the world, with important support from federal agencies. To maintain the progress already achieved, we have identified essential programs in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of the Interior in fiscal year 2017. We urge the Subcommittee to include strong support for these programs in the Interior bill this year.

States in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have been working together to restore and protect this national treasure since 1983, when they signed the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement and formed the Chesapeake Bay Program partnership with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Commission.

As a testament to the value of this multistate partnership, New York, West Virginia, and Delaware have now joined the original signatories of Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and the District of Columbia to sign the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

Through this partnership, states have committed to restore the water quality in the Bay by 2025 and to coordinate their restoration programs. We must maintain federal investment in the programs below to support state efforts and ensure the success of the restoration.

**Chesapeake Bay Program (CWA 117):**

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a regional partnership that leads and directs Chesapeake Bay restoration and protection. Partners include federal and state agencies, local governments, non-profit organizations and academic institutions. Funding supports the coordination of the science, research, modeling, support services, monitoring, data collection, and other activities essential to ensure that state blueprints will achieve their goals. Most program funds go to states and local partners to implement pollution reduction activities. Within this account, we support set-aside funding for Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants, which are competitive funds for local restoration efforts.

**State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Clean Water State Revolving Fund:**

The CWSRF is an important, flexible financing program that allows states to provide low-cost loans to local governments for the priority wastewater and stormwater projects that they have identified in their Bay watershed cleanup plans.

**State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (CWA 319)**

Nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, where 92 segments are impaired by nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment. States are implementing agricultural,

urban, and residential best management practices with the support of Section 319(h) grants. States also provide significant project management and technical assistance to local stakeholders to install these practices.

**Pollution Control Grants (CWA 106)**

These grants help states in the Bay watershed manage the federal water pollution permit program, or NPDES. Under the Clean Water Act is unlawful to discharge any pollutant into US waters without a NPDES permit. Without sufficient funding, this permit process gets bogged down, resulting in business losses and reduced permit monitoring and enforcement. An effective permit program is the backbone of the Bay watershed cleanup.

**Department of Interior Chesapeake Bay Initiative**

This initiative supports the essential recovery of watershed habitat, fish and wildlife, restoration of water quality, land conservation and increased public access to natural lands in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. It supports US Geological Survey water quality monitoring and biological research, the Fish and Wildlife Service work to maintain existing nature preserves and monitor species, and the National Park Service maintenance and expansion of regional historic trails and increased public access through the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Program.

**Land and Water Conservation Fund**

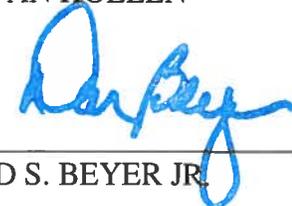
The Land and Water Conservation Fund, including the President’s budget proposal for a “Rivers of the Chesapeake” initiative, helps to protect large-scale landscapes throughout the Bay watershed. This funding would provide significant support to the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement goal of conserving an additional 2 million acres of land by 2025 and increase the impact of existing preservation efforts. By working with willing sellers to acquire or place under easement high priority lands throughout the watershed, agencies would enhance habitat connectivity for the protection of rare and endangered species, preserve the scenic integrity of National Trails, preserve land associated with Civil War battlefields and American Indian heritage, protect forests important for Bay water quality, and enhance public access to waterways.

The Chesapeake Bay has shown improvement but we need to maintain our momentum to return the Bay to its place among the most economically productive estuaries. States have invested significant time and resources into doing their share to clean the Bay. It is essential to continue this progress. We thank you for supporting this essential partnership with Bay states in an extraordinary effort to restore our national treasure for current and future generations.

Sincerely,

  
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

  
ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT

  
DONALD S. BEYER JR.

  
JOHN CARNEY



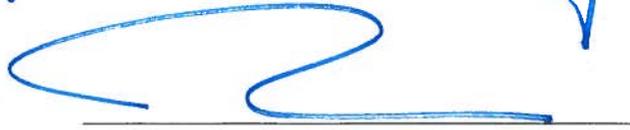
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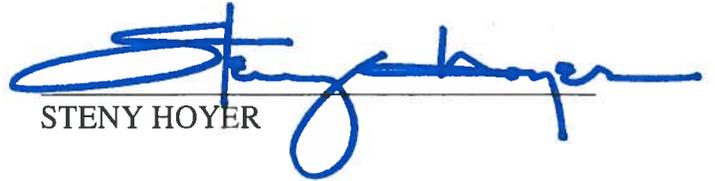
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