

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

April 1, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chairwoman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

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 legacy of leadership with respect to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. Chesapeake Bay states are heavily invested in implementing a Blueprint designed to restore this national treasure. Federal partnership to support this complex, cross-state effort is key to their success. The Bay restoration effort is at a critical moment in time. While the Bay has made significant strides toward a shared clean water goal, more work and resources are needed to complete this undertaking. To maintain the trust and collaboration of state partners and keep the momentum of their efforts, we have identified essential programs in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Department of the Interior in fiscal year 2020. We urge the Subcommittee to include at least the following funding levels for these programs in the Interior bill this year:

- **Environmental Protection Agency**
  - **Chesapeake Bay Program – \$90 million**
  - **Clean Water State Revolving Fund – \$1.74 billion**
  - **Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants – \$171 million**
  - **Pollution Control Grants – \$231 million**
- **Department of Interior**
  - **National Recreation and Preservation Account – report language**
  - **USGS Chesapeake Bay Program Activities – \$12.85 million**
  - **Land and Water Conservation Fund – \$435 million**
- **Department of Agriculture – Cooperative Forestry**
  - **Forest Stewardship Program – \$20 million**
  - **Urban and Community Forestry Program – \$30 million**

States in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed have been working together to restore this national treasure since 1983, when Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania signed the first Chesapeake Bay Agreement -- a voluntary, regional partnership to achieve the states' vision of an environmentally and economically sustainable Chesapeake Bay Watershed. That same year, Congress established the Chesapeake Bay Program to support this agreement. As a testament to the value of this federal-state partnership, all watershed states signed the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. Under this Agreement, states and federal agencies have voluntarily committed to work together to restore water quality in the Bay by

2025. We must maintain federal investment in the programs below to support state efforts and ensure their success.

#### **Chesapeake Bay Program (CWA §117)**

This program was created under President Ronald Reagan to support the voluntary Chesapeake Bay Agreement. It is a unique regional partnership that brings together leaders and experts from a vast range of agencies and organizations. Each Bay Program partner uses its own resources to implement Bay restoration and protections activities. Federal Bay Program funds are used to coordinate the complex *cross-state* science, research, modeling, monitoring, data collection, and other activities essential to support Partners' collaboration. Over 60% of federal funds go to states, primarily through grants programs that leverage private investment for restoration activities. Within this account, we support set-aside funding for Chesapeake Small Watershed Grants and Innovative Nutrient and Sediment Reduction Grants.

#### **STAG/Clean Water State Revolving Fund**

The CWSRF is an important, flexible financing program that provides communities a permanent, independent source of low-cost financing for the water quality infrastructure projects critical to Agreement success.

#### **STAG/Nonpoint Source Implementation Grants (CWA §319)**

Nonpoint source pollution is a significant cause of water pollution in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Section 319(h) grants are available to locate and partially finance the agricultural, urban, and residential best management practices (BMPs) planned pursuant to the Agreement and to leverage other local and private funding sources. States also independently provide project management and technical assistance to local stakeholders to install these practices.

#### **STAG/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, it 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.

#### **National Recreation and Preservation Account**

The National Recreation and Preservation (NR&P) account provides critical partnerships between the National Parks Service and outside organizations to further meaningful and valuable recreation and conservation planning. The NR&P funds a variety of natural, cultural, and recreational assistance programs, including the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network, that have been critical in providing support to state, local, and tribal land managers. For this mission to be properly carried out by the NR&P, we urge the Subcommittee to include the following language:

*The committee supports full funding for previous years' programs under the National Park Services' National Recreation and Preservation account, including the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network.*

#### **Department of Interior USGS Chesapeake Bay Program Activities**

The US Geologic Survey (USGS) conducts the watershed-wide research, assessment, monitoring, and modeling that helps Chesapeake Bay partners make informed management decisions to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay. This data and analysis are critical for Federal, State, and academic science partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program to plan the best stewardship of natural resources and taxpayer dollars. USGS Chesapeake Bay Program activities are conducted under five Mission Areas and

appropriations accounts: Ecosystems, Water, Environmental Health, Climate Change and Land Use, and Core Science Systems.

**Department of Interior Land and Water Conservation Fund**

The Land and Water Conservation Fund helps to protect large-scale landscapes throughout the Bay watershed. This fund provides significant support to the Agreement goal of conserving an additional 2 million acres of land by 2025 and increasing the impact of existing conservation efforts.

**Department of Agriculture Forestry Stewardship Program**


The Forest Stewardship Program funds the U.S. Forest Service's Chesapeake Bay Program, state forestry efforts, forest buffers, and conservations goals. Working in partnership with state forestry agencies, cooperative extension, and conservation districts, the Forest Stewardship Program connects private landowners with the resources they need to manage their forests and woodlands, including helping to restore riparian forest buffers that are critical to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The program promotes actively managed forests, which provide timber, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and watershed protection, among other benefits.


**Department of Agriculture Urban and Community Forestry Program**


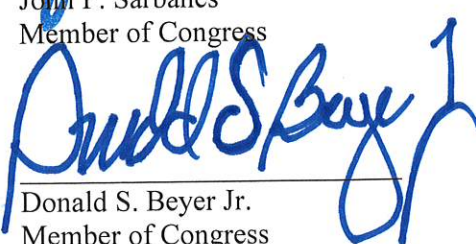
The Urban and Community Forestry Program within the Department of Agriculture supports forest health for all of our Nation's forests. The program also creates jobs and enhances community resilience. The Urban and Community Forestry Program works with state partners to deliver information, tools and financial resources to maintain, restore, and improve community forest land, which is critical to the health of the Chesapeake Bay.

Chesapeake Bay States have invested significant resources into restoring a national treasure. In fact, state investments continue to dwarf federal investments as OMB reported to Congress in the Chesapeake Cross-cut Budget in October 2017. To maintain the spirit of trust and collaboration that is the hallmark of this successful federal-state partnership, it is essential to maintain consistent federal support for this effort. The Chesapeake Bay is showing great improvement. The federal government must uphold its robust commitment to ensure the Bay's economic and environmental resilience. 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,


  
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress


  
Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress

  
John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress  
  
Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress




  
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A. Donald McEachin  
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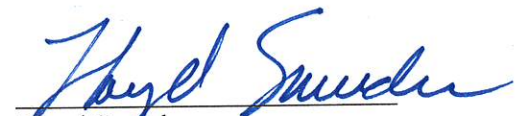
  
Alex Mooney  
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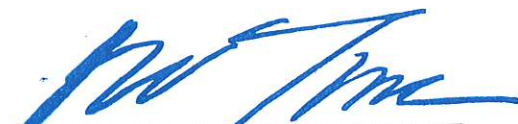
  
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