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July 11, 2023

Office of the Mayor  
Gavin Buckley, Mayor  
160 Duke of Gloucester Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401-2517

Senator Chris Van Hollen  
730 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC, 20510

## **Chesapeake Bay National Recreation Area**

Dear Senator Van Hollen,

The Chesapeake Bay is central to the life and prosperity of Annapolis, the region, and the nation. That is why I am proud to be a local partner in your efforts to establish a Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA) that will bring recognition to the importance of the Bay and provide resources to support its natural, cultural, historical, and recreational significance.

Designating a unified CNRA as part of the National Park System will bring enormous benefits including:

- an opportunity to better conserve the Bay, deliver additional federal resources to the region, and generate more – and more sustainable – economic opportunities
- promoting a healthy ecosystem and habitat, conserving and protecting lands, bolstering environmental stewardship and climate resiliency
- sparking environmentally conscious tourism that supports those in the food, lodging, outdoor recreation, and travel businesses, with potential to generate billions of dollars in new revenue. (According to the National Park Service, visitors spent \$20.5 billion in local gateway regions while visiting national parks in 2021.)

Importantly, the CNRA will highlight the stories that often go untold – those of Indigenous peoples; free and enslaved Blacks; and the role the Bay played in the earliest days of the Maryland and Virginia Colonies.

Annapolis has a particular interest in this history, as it's economy was boosted for many decades by the contributions of watermen and women who are essential to the economic success and health of our city and the Bay region.

The upcoming redevelopment of the Annapolis City Dock provides a critical and timely opportunity to highlight these often overlooked aspects of our history. Our new City Dock will also provide a transportation hub and an outstanding visitor experience that will connect to and complement other destinations across the CNRA. It will also be a showcase for the resilience efforts being led across the Bay, including one of the nation's first electric ferry systems.

I thank you and Congressman Sarbanes for your partnership and your work in drafting this legislation to highlight the national significance of the Chesapeake Bay. Annapolis is ready to play its part and I whole-heartedly support this Bill. I would encourage your Congressional colleagues to support its passage also. It offers a unique opportunity to foster access, resources, and economic growth and deliver hugely significant regional and national benefits.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gavin Buckley", written in a cursive style.

Gavin Buckley  
Mayor

Cc. Congressman John Sarbanes