



July 11, 2023

Senator Chris Van Hollen
60 West Street, Suite 107
Annapolis, MD 21401

Representation John Sarbanes
44 Calvert Street, Suite 349
Annapolis, MD 21401

RE: Chesapeake National Recreation Area Proposed Legislation

Dear Senator Van Hollen and Representative Sarbanes:

The Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation (AAEDC) writes to express our support for the proposed Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA) as part of the National Park System.

Anne Arundel County is home to over 530 miles of coastline along the Chesapeake Bay that provide a prime location for recreation experiences such as boating, fishing, crabbing, water sports, sailing, and swimming. The Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries offer natural and cultural resources that draw visitors to enjoy the shoreline experiences and learn about its history and culture.

In addition to serving the tourism economy, the shoreline and waterways house maritime businesses, educational programs and government institutions. Anne Arundel County's history is rooted in its maritime industry, which serves as a major driver of economic growth and stability. AAEDC supports a CNRA designation that would help to sustain these critical economic functions, bolster tourism activity and increase public access to the waterfront.

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, "national park visitors make a significant contribution to the nation's economy and, especially to gateway communities in and adjacent to these areas. In 2021, local gateway regions attracted close to 300 million visitors, generating \$20.5 billion in visitor spending and creating 323 thousand jobs."

Federal investment in the Chesapeake Bay will elevate its national and international significance, thus generating economic benefits to food, lodging, recreational and maritime related businesses. This investment also preserves invaluable historic and cultural resources that tell the stories of our past, particularly those of the Burtis House, Whitehall and historic downtown Annapolis.

The Chesapeake National Recreation Area designation achieves multiple policy goals of ecological stewardship, historic and cultural preservation, economic development, and equity. AAEDC appreciates and supports your efforts to deliver resources to one of Anne Arundel's key economic assets and create a regional amenity that the public can enjoy and celebrate.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Amy Gowan", is written over a faint, light-colored circular stamp.

Amy Gowan
CEO and President