

July 6, 2023

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Sarbanes
U.S. House of Representatives
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: *Chesapeake National Recreation Area*

Dear Senator Van Hollen and Representative Sarbanes:

On behalf of the Jefferson County Parks & Recreation Commission in West Virginia, I am writing to thank you for your leadership to create the Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA), a new unit of the National Park System in the Chesapeake watershed. As a county parks & recreation department, our mission is to provide safe public parks for our citizens to recreate, as well as provide quality programs for all ages to enjoy. We are a growing community of 58,000 residents and rely heavily on tourism within our community. We are in the eastern panhandle of WV and have a park located on the Shenandoah River, which brings tens of thousands to its banks each year.

Those of us who live and work in this region know that the Chesapeake Bay watershed is a natural wonder fully deserving of national park status. We strongly support the goals of the new recreation area to recognize the Chesapeake's national significance, conserve and interpret these resources, expand public access, enhance tourism and local economies, engage watershed communities, promote diversity and equity, improve water quality, and advance the conservation goals of the Chesapeake Bay Program and the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. We look forward to working with you to ensure the Chesapeake is recognized for its natural and historic significance through inclusion in the National Park System.

We endorse the acquisition of land and land-based resources via willing donation, purchase from a willing seller, and/or exchange or transfer from another Federal Agency. And we support the requirements that nothing in the Act would impact or affect commercial or recreational fishing or enlarge or diminish jurisdiction of each State, with respect to fish and wildlife management.

Establishing the CNRA will allow all stories of the watershed, its citizens, and its history to be shared with visitors from across the world. The creation of the CNRA will enhance public understanding of the Bay at participating National Park Service sites and partner sites to tell the story of the outstanding, remarkable, and nationally significant resources of the Bay watershed.



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Thank you once again for leading this important initiative. We look forward to working with you on bill introduction and final passage to establish this new national recreation area in the Chesapeake.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Myers
Director

Cc: The Honorable Ben Cardin
The Honorable Mark Warner
The Honorable Tim Kaine
The Honorable Bobby Scott