

July 7, 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:

I am personally 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 Black woman living in a world where I'm often overlooked, I've felt connected to the natural world in a special way. This is a big reason why I've made it my life's mission to advocate for the appreciation and protection of BIPOC communities and our environment.

The Chesapeake Bay will always have a special place in my heart as I've lived in the watershed my entire life. I'm reminded of the beauty of the watershed daily through the diverse landscapes and people who call them home.

What better way to honor this than to establish the Chesapeake National Recreation Area for ALL to access and experience the beauty of the land and water that connect us.

I strongly support the establishment of this new national recreation area, and I look forward to working with you to ensure that the Chesapeake is recognized for its natural and historic significance by inclusion in the National Park System.

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. I 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.

I 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 I 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.

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

Sincerely,

Maya Alexander

mnalex94@gmail.com

(443) 986-0626

107 Community Way, Apt 321

Staunton, VA 24401

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