



OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

Marc Elrich  
*County Executive*

July 10, 2023

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

Dear Senator Van Hollen:

I am writing in support of the proposed legislation creating the Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA). The CNRA will tell the story of the nation's largest estuary and one of the world's largest environmental restoration efforts. The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure and deserves the respect and recognition this designation will provide.

This designation will provide additional federal resources to the region and generate more economic opportunities for those who work within the CNRA. The CNRA will also allow new sites throughout the region to join the effort on a voluntary basis and will leverage existing sites through partnerships between the National Park Service (NPS) and localities. Because over 90% of the shoreline of the Chesapeake Bay is privately owned, the CNRA will increase access to the Bay by providing pathways for voluntary participation in recreation areas.

The CNRA will tell the story of many of the unsung heroes of the Bay, including the story of the watermen and -women who are essential to the economic success and health of the Bay. It will also help to breakdown racial equity and social justice barriers by highlighting stories that often go untold, those of Indigenous peoples, and free and enslaved Blacks.

Although Montgomery County will not be in the CNRA, Montgomery County is in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and many of its residents use the Chesapeake Bay for recreational opportunities and will benefit from the CNRA.

I commend your leadership in sponsoring this bill, and I strongly encourage Congress to pass the authorization creating the Chesapeake National Recreation Area.

Sincerely,

Marc Elrich  
County Executive