



July 6, 2023

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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 Shenandoah National Park Trust, 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 the official philanthropic partner of Shenandoah National Park, since 2007, the Trust provides strategic investments in programs and initiatives that help protect, enhance, and preserve the resources of Shenandoah National Park for all to enjoy- for this and future generations. As a current partner to an NPS unit we understand how important protected recreational areas are to our communities and our region. Not only do they provide critical protection of sensitive eco-systems, but they also provide our communities with greater access to the benefits of nature. We strongly support the establishment of this new national recreation area, and we 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.

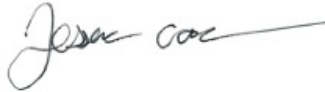
Those of us who live and work in this region know that the Chesapeake Bay watershed is a natural wonder fully deserving of national park status. We strongly support the goals of the new recreation area to recognize the Chesapeake's national significance, conserve and interpret these resources, expand 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 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.

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.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jessica Cocciolone". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jessica Cocciolone
Executive Director

