

Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project, Inc.

Hope F. Cupit, CPA
President & CEO



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 Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project (SERCAP), I am writing to thank you for your leadership in creating the Chesapeake National Recreation Area (CNRA), a new unit of the National Park System in the Chesapeake watershed. Our non-profit serves seven states from Delaware down to Florida, with three of those on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay. Our mission to improve the quality of life for rural communities and residents includes a great deal of technical assistance to communities with water and sewer systems that are adjacent to the Bay. It is in the best interest of our organization and the communities we work with to protect, preserve and celebrate the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. It is an integral part of the area's economy and culture and a most precious natural resource.

We believe the creation of the proposed National Recreation Area will encourage recognition of the Bay's significance and the need to protect it as a central part of the state of Maryland and its history. We strongly support establishing 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.



Water Is Life

Phone (540) 345-1184

347 Campbell Avenue, SW
Roanoke, VA 24016

www.southeastrcap.org

Fax (540) 342-2932

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. We further 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.

Sincerely,



Hope Cupit (Jul 7, 2023 13:11 EDT)

Hope F. Cupit
Chief Executive Officer

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