



VIRGINIA



OCEAN CITY

July 5, 2023

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Sarbanes
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Chesapeake National Recreation Area

Dear Senator Van Hollen and Representative Sarbanes,

The Surfrider Foundation would like 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.

Surfrider is a grassroots environmental organization of 80 chapters, 90 youth clubs, and more than 500,000 supporters, activists, and members in the United States, dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's oceans, waves, and beaches, for all people. We submit these comments on behalf of our local Ocean City, Maryland and Virginia Chapters.

As supporters of sustainable recreation and tourism, and as protectors of coasts and oceans in the Chesapeake region, we wholeheartedly support the goals of the CNRA draft bill celebrating the region's diverse cultural history, conserving the Bay watershed's environmental resources; increasing public access, stewardship, and outdoor recreational opportunities, highlighting the untold stories of the region, and bringing economic resources to the area.

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.

Sincerely,

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