

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

November 30, 2020

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey  
Chairwoman  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-307, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger:

As the House and Senate negotiate the final Fiscal Year 2021 funding bill, we urge you to adopt the funding level and report language from the House-passed Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Bill, which provides for \$90.5 million in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Chesapeake Bay Program.

Since the states and EPA agreed to the Chesapeake Bay watershed restoration goals in 2010, much progress has been made towards improving the health of the watershed. Today, we are at a critical juncture in Chesapeake Bay restoration. Positive signs of recovery have emerged in the Chesapeake Bay itself and in tributaries throughout the entire watershed, proving that the collaborative restoration effort is working. We are more than half-way to achieving the shared goal of clean water by 2025.

But as the 2025 deadline approaches, it is clear that more resources are needed to continue the progress made. New research pertaining to increased nutrient and sediment flows through the Conowingo Dam indicates that we must reduce over 6 million pounds of pollution beyond the original 2010 targets. To address this issue, in December 2017, the Chesapeake Bay Program Principals' Staff Committee (PSC) agreed to work collaboratively on a separate Conowingo Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP).

More broadly, although we now know which conservation practices provide the greatest return, we lack funding for implementation at the scale required. Dollars are needed at three levels: 1) the small watershed and innovative practices grant programs; 2) local government technical assistance and implementation; and 3) state-based targeted and cost-effective implementation.

We appreciate the \$85 million included in the Senate bill, but we think the resource needs in the Chesapeake Bay watershed demonstrate a need for an increase to \$90.5 million. By increasing the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program funding level to \$90.5 million, it would be possible to achieve significant measurable results in each of these areas, and each federal dollar leverages many more in State, local and private funding.

The Chesapeake Bay is an economic driver for the entire region – including recreation, education, and commercial enterprises. It is critical that the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort meet its 2025 pollution

reduction goals. The Chesapeake Bay Program is a national model for clean water partnerships and an important bellwether for the success of other major body of water restoration efforts around the country. We are within sight of delivering clean water. For these reasons, we hope you will support funding the program at \$90.5 million in the conference report.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator

/s/ Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator

/s/ Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

/s/ John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress

/s/ Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress

/s/ Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress

/s/ Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

/s/ Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/ Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

/s/ Anthony G. Brown  
Member of Congress

/s/ A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

/s/ David J. Trone  
Member of Congress

/s/ Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress

/s/ Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress

/s/ Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress

/s/ Abigail D. Spanberger  
Member of Congress

/s/ Denver Riggleman  
Member of Congress