

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 21, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As members of the Chesapeake Bay delegation, we request your Administration increase its investment in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed by initiating a Chesapeake Resilient Farms Initiative (CRFI) in your Fiscal Year 2023 President's Budget Proposal.

For decades, our states, local governments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have partnered to restore and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Now, we are approaching a critical 2025 deadline to ensure all necessary pollution control measures are in place to fully restore the Bay and its tributaries. Approximately 85 percent of the remaining pollution reductions must come from agriculture and forestry. Therefore, a core component of the effort to clean up the Bay must include increasing and targeting conservation assistance to farmers in the watershed.

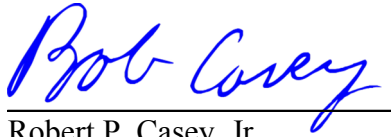
As farmers continue to face challenging economic conditions, additional focus by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is vital to accelerating conservation efforts in the Bay. Establishment of a regional initiative of this scale and for these purposes is not without precedent. CRFI would be modeled after the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, which was created in 2009 by USDA using existing authority. A newly created CRFI would target financial and technical assistance by focusing on the most effective basins for pollution reduction and prioritizing cost-effective practices that improve water quality, sequester greenhouse gas emissions and improve on-farm resiliency.

We know USDA conservation programs are effective when deployed at scale. These voluntary, targeted federal investments would be matched by funds from states, NGOs or farmers receiving assistance. But without additional federal resources – for both practice implementation and technical assistance -- we will not be able to reduce pollution levels consistent with the most recent Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.

Over the last several months, support has grown for the creation of CRFI, including through endorsements from all the state Agriculture Secretaries and Farm Bureaus in the Bay region. We are aligned in this effort to deliver clean water and healthy, resilient farms for the region and urge your support for the establishment of a Chesapeake Resilient Farms Initiative.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



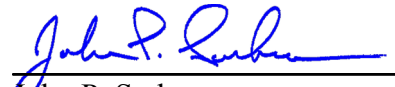
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



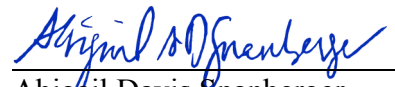
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



Abigail Davis Spanberger
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Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator



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Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



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United States Senator



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



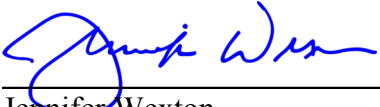
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress



Jennifer Wexton
Member of Congress