



October 16, 2017

Dear Senator:

The undersigned members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition urge you to cosponsor Senator Chris Van Hollen's Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act of 2017, which should be introduced soon. This bill is essential to maintaining and restoring clean water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

There are 87,000 farms in the six-state Chesapeake region. Those that are well run protect their water resources and add much to our landscape, environment, and economy. We want to ensure that these responsible farms and farmers remain economically viable. Nutrient and sediment pollution from farms is by far the largest source of contamination in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Recognizing this, the 2008 Farm Bill established the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative that provided \$238 million over five years to producers in the region to apply conservation practices on their farms that would help to restore and/or protect water quality.

The 2014 Farm Bill created the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) that replaced a number of geographic programs, including the Chesapeake Initiative. Unfortunately, the RCPP has provided a significantly reduced level of support for conservation in the Chesapeake region providing only 22 percent of the funds that were previously allocated under the Chesapeake Initiative in the prior Farm Bill.

Senator Van Hollen's Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act of 2017 makes some important changes to the RCPP that will fix many of the problems the Program had in our region. Farmers will get critical funding for conservation practices that will lead to cleaner streams and rivers as well as a healthier Chesapeake Bay.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request that is critical to clean water throughout the Chesapeake Bay region. Please be an original cosponsor of the Chesapeake Bay Farm Bill Enhancements Act of 2017.

Sincerely,

Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
American Rivers
Anacostia Watershed Society
Audubon Naturalist Society
Butternut Valley Alliance
Cecil Land Use Association
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Clean Water Action

Address: 20 Ridgely Avenue,
Suite 203
Annapolis, MD 21401

Phone: (443) 927-8047
Fax: (443) 927-8050

Email: info@choosecleanwater.org
Website: www.ChooseCleanWater.org

Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
Delaware Nature Society
Earth Force
Earth Forum of Howard County
Friends of Accotink Creek
Friends of the Bohemia
Friends of the Middle River
Friends of the Nanticoke River
Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River
Friends of the Rappahannock
Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
James River Association
Lackawanna River Conservation Association
Lancaster Farmland Trust
Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway
Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association
Maryland Conservation Council
Maryland League of Conservation Voters
Maryland Native Plant Society
Mehoopany Creek Watershed Association
Mid-Atlantic Youth Anglers & Outdoors Program
Montgomery Countryside Alliance
National Parks Conservation Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Abounds
New York League of Conservation Voters
New York State Council of Trout Unlimited
Otsego County Conservation Association
Otsego Land Trust
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Piedmont Environmental Council
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Prince William Conservation Alliance
Rachel Carson Council
Rivertown Coalition for Clean Air & Water
Rock Creek Conservancy
Savage River Watershed Association
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
Shenandoah Valley Network
Sidney Center Improvement Group
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
Southern Environmental Law Center
Southeast Rural Community Assistance Project
Southern Maryland Audubon Society
SouthWings
Sparks-Glencoe Community Planning Council
St. Mary's Watershed Association
Susquehanna Heritage
Trout Unlimited
Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
Virginia Conservation Network

Virginia Eastern Shorekeeper
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
West/Rhode Riverkeeper
West Virginia Rivers Coalition