

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2004

February 9, 2021

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

Dear President Biden:

We respectfully ask that you prioritize funding for Chesapeake Bay restoration activities in your FY2022 President's Budget Proposal. The Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in the United States. Its watershed, declared a national treasure in Executive Order 13508 (2009), comprises a 64,000 square-mile area and includes portions of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia and the entire District of Columbia. State and local governments in the seven jurisdictions, federal agencies, and academic, nongovernmental, and other partners have collaborated to restore the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem for decades. Now, as the 2025 target to have all practices and controls installed to achieve water quality standards approaches, funding programs that invest in climate solutions, sustainably manage water resources, restore habitat, and strengthen public access for outdoor recreation will advance not only the shared goals and outcomes for the restoration of the Bay, but also bolster the recovery of the regional economy.

Although the majority of funding for Bay restoration comes from jurisdictions within the watershed, federal agencies have made substantial commitments to this effort, in addition to having long-standing programs and responsibilities that affect the Bay. Such agencies include the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Geological Survey, National Park Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), considered the lead agency.

The Trump administration's budget requests proposed drastic decreases for key programs across multiple agencies, including the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program (CBP), which has guided Bay restoration since 1983. Fortunately, Congress rejected the proposal on a bipartisan basis, increasing appropriations for the CBP and reauthorizing it at \$90.5 million for FY2022 in the America's Conservation Enhancement (ACE) Act (P.L.116-188), along with other new and existing programs to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributary rivers and streams.

The health of the Chesapeake Bay is improving over time as a result of these investments, reflected in improved dissolved oxygen levels and successful large-scale oyster restoration. However, challenges remain, including financing stormwater and wastewater infrastructure upgrades and agricultural best management practices, as well as continuing to reduce pollution despite pressures such as increased extreme weather events driven by climate change. Increased, targeted financial and technical assistance for programs including those contained in the Clean Water Act and Farm Bill at this critical juncture will help ensure the jurisdictions can accelerate adoption of cost-effective nutrient and sediment controls from such sources by 2025, in

accordance with the Chesapeake Bay TMDL (2010) and affirmed in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement (2014).

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to restore the Bay for the benefit of the region's millions of watershed residents and visitors.

Sincerely,

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin

Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator

/s/ Thomas R. Carper

Thomas R. Carper
United States Senator

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Mark R. Warner

Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

/s/ Joe Manchin III

Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine

Tim Kaine
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator