



MARYLAND
Chamber of Commerce

September 27, 2021

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Sarbanes
United States House of Representatives
2370 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Van Hollen and Congressman Sarbanes,

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce would like to express our support for the proposal to establish a Chesapeake National Recreation Area, which would be an official unit of the National Park System dedicated to the Chesapeake Bay. As members of Maryland's business community, we recognize both the economic and environmental importance of the Chesapeake Bay for Maryland communities and businesses. We believe this federal designation would greatly benefit the Chesapeake Bay, its people, and the Maryland economy.

The Chesapeake Bay is Maryland's greatest natural resource and it is treasured by Maryland residents and visitors for its parks and water-based recreation, for its seafood, and for its rich history and its unique culture. Many coastal communities in Maryland benefit economically from tourism that celebrates and leverages the natural and historical resources of the Chesapeake Bay, and they benefit from parks that provide access to the Bay and to outdoor recreation opportunities.

Boating, recreational fishing and hunting are also tourism drivers in the Chesapeake Bay and these activities are a significant part of the Maryland's outdoor recreation economy. In fact, outdoor recreation adds more than \$7 billion annually in economic value to Maryland's economy and supports 89,000 direct jobs and nearly \$4 billion in wages and salaries.

By creating visitor centers that tell the story of the Bay and provide access to the Bay and its resources, and by creating a national park-worthy visitor experience at parks and sites in Maryland, we believe this federal designation would support Maryland businesses, especially those that leverage tourism and recreation in the Chesapeake Bay. We note that nationwide, national parks provide significant economic benefits to gateway communities, and in 2019, tourism and spending generated by national parks added \$41.7 billion to the U.S. economy.

Thank you for your leadership on this proposal.

Sincerely,

The Maryland Chamber of Commerce

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