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The Johns Hopkins University
The University System of Maryland
Virginia Institute of Marine Science
Smithsonian Institution
Old Dominion University
Pennsylvania State University
Virginia Tech

1 June, 2017,

The Honorable _____
Street Address
City, State Zip

Dear Representative _____ {or Senator _____}:

We are writing to you as leaders of major research institutions in the Chesapeake Bay watershed to seek your support for sustained federal investments in science that are critical to the protection and restoration of the regional environment, and to its economy. The Chesapeake Bay Program, a partnership among the Federal Government, the states and our academic institutions, has played the leading role in providing and facilitating this investment, and incredible progress in meeting the Program's goals has been made over the past three decades.

The proposed elimination of federal appropriations in FY18 for this program in the Environmental Protection Agency's budget would seriously diminish the research, monitoring and analyses that our institutions provide as a critical part of the widely-shared goals of cleaning up and restoring the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Our institutions provide unbiased science that is then used to benefit the citizens of all states in the watershed. The fact that this effort has been solidly based on cutting-edge science, guided by a Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee under the auspices of this Consortium, has made the Chesapeake Bay Program a role model for similar efforts in our country and indeed around the world.

Quite simply, even modest reductions to the EPA Chesapeake Bay Program would irrevocably break the contract wherein the Federal Government, the states, local governments and our academic institutions all bring resources and capabilities to the table to serve our citizens. This long-term partnership has served the Chesapeake Bay region particularly well and we are justifiably proud of the world-class expertise our institutions have sustained and the seminal scientific contributions that have resulted.

The economic consequences of a loss in Bay funds would in fact extend far beyond the loss that our institutions may experience and would affect the economy throughout our coastal regions. For example:

- The funding for technical support to assist local governments is used to effectively respond to court-ordered nutrient reduction targets.
- Water quality monitoring and modeling, largely supported by federal funds, are necessary to guide and assess the effectiveness of nutrient reduction efforts, as well as to protect public health.
- Program support is leveraged effectively within ongoing oyster and seagrass restoration programs and for efforts to characterize and protect the forage fish that support Chesapeake Bay fisheries.

(over)

The excellence in science and its wise and balanced application has taken decades to build and would be put at risk by failure to recognize the value of these collective efforts and not continue them. We view this as unacceptable and urge you to ensure that current appropriation levels are at least sustained as we all work to complete the pressing job of Chesapeake Bay restoration. Furthermore, we stand ready to assist in any way that we can by providing detailed information on our work and assisting local governments as they pursue healthy waters and the economic and public health benefits that they bring.

Sincerely yours,



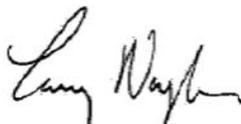
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