

May 13, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We write today to request your support for a bold plan to stimulate state and local economies in the Mid-Atlantic region and restore America's largest estuary – the Chesapeake Bay. Our proposal is the *Billion for the Bay Initiative*: a significant and much needed infusion of new funds that will jumpstart the final phase of Bay restoration and put people to work building clean water infrastructure, including green infrastructure that will reduce stormwater and agricultural water pollution, the restoration of natural landscapes, and helping us adapt to the impacts of climate change.

We face a 2025 deadline under the Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) to meet pollution reduction goals that will ensure clean water in the Bay and its tributaries across six states and the District of Columbia. While we are making great progress and appreciate recent increases in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's Chesapeake Bay Program, the lion's share of fiscal responsibilities for these efforts falls on our jurisdictions. As you know, state and local government budgets have been hit hard during the COVID-19 pandemic, making it much more difficult to afford wastewater treatment plant upgrades, enhanced stormwater management systems, stream, forest, and wetlands restoration, and agricultural best management practices necessary to restore the Bay. Many individuals, including farmers and ratepayers who must share in the cost of these upgrades, are also struggling.

The specific benefits of the *Billion for the Bay Initiative* are two-fold:

1. Enhance and maintain efforts to meet the 2025 deadline for Bay cleanup

Each of the Bay states and the District of Columbia have developed a jurisdiction-specific Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) identifying the most strategic practices

and geographic regions for investment. In addition, our unique partnership has prepared a separate WIP to tackle pollution flowing over the Conowingo Dam. Distribution of the *Billion for the Bay* dollars should reflect our established priorities and can be distributed through existing programs within the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Agriculture, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation that have proven track records of success. This initiative would leverage significant state and local funding and energize private capital through conservation financing to support cost-effective, long-term environmental solutions.

2. Create jobs and grow economic activity

Every million dollars invested in clean water infrastructure can create more than 16 jobs¹, so the *Billion for the Bay Initiative* will also add tens of thousands of job opportunities to help spur our economic recovery. Further, a clean Bay will generate more than \$22 billion dollars each year in new economic value from improved commercial and recreational fishing, reduced drinking water treatment costs, resilience to climate change, and improved property values and quality of life in the region.²

As you consider infrastructure and climate-related funding, we ask that you include the *Billion for the Bay Initiative*. This is an opportunity to achieve the long-elusive goal of restoring the Chesapeake Bay, while creating significant new job opportunities, building resilience to climate change, and protecting landscapes and waterways across multiple states.

We look forward to additional conversations with you and your colleagues from the region on how to design and implement this important program for maximum success.

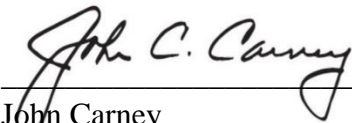
Sincerely,



Ralph S. Northam
Governor, Commonwealth of Virginia



Larry Hogan
Governor, State of Maryland



John Carney
Governor, State of Delaware



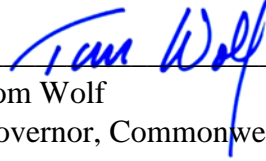
Andrew Cuomo
Governor, State of New York

¹ Water Environment Federation and Wateruse Association, *Analysis of National Economic, Job Creation, and Tax Revenue Benefits from Increased Funding to the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds*, 2016.


² Chesapeake Bay Foundation, *The Economic Benefits of Cleaning Up the Chesapeake*, October 2014.



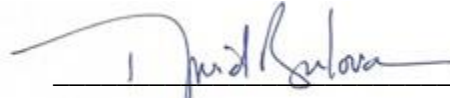
Jim Justice
Governor, State of West Virginia



Tom Wolf
Governor, Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



Muriel Bowser
Mayor, District of Columbia



David L. Bulova
Chair, Chesapeake Bay Commission

Cc:

The Honorable Patrick Leahy, Chairman, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Richard Shelby, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro, Chair, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on
Appropriations
The Honorable Kay Granger, Ranking Member, U.S. House of Representatives Committee on
Appropriations