



February 26, 2021

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin, Chair
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hoeven, Ranking Minority Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related
Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Baldwin and Ranking Member Hoeven:

The undersigned members of the Choose Clean Water Coalition request continued support for clean water in the Chesapeake Bay watershed through fully funding the conservation programs of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (2018 Farm Bill). There are 83,000 farms in the six-state Chesapeake region and they are critical to the economy - responsible for more than \$10 billion of agricultural production each year. After forests, agriculture is the largest land use in the watershed.

The 2018 Farm Bill, which we strongly supported, should, if fully implemented and funded, ensure that well run, responsible farms in the Chesapeake region remain economically viable. The Conservation Title of the 2018 Farm Bill is also critical to maintain and restore clean water in the rivers and streams throughout the Chesapeake region, and for the Bay itself. These programs are essential for regulated agricultural operations to meet federal requirements under the Clean Water Act and help farmers meet state regulations that address both farm health and water quality.

We urge you to maintain full funding for mandatory agricultural conservation programs in Fiscal Year 2022. The 2018 Farm Bill made a number of improvements to key programs and should accelerate our path toward clean water in our region, but only if these conservation programs are funded as Congress intended. With the support of much of the conservation community and clean water advocates, the 2018 Farm Bill maintained level funding for the Conservation Title.

Two-thirds of the 18 million people in the Chesapeake region get the water they drink directly from the rivers and streams that flow through the cities, towns, and farms throughout our six state, 64,000 square mile watershed. Protecting and restoring clean water is essential for human health and for a robust regional economy. Much of the work and funding necessary to achieve and maintain clean and healthy water in this region could be accomplished through the Farm Bill's Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). We urge you to provide full funding

in FY22 - \$300 million for the RCPP. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed is one of the Critical Conservation Areas under the RCPP, and this program is vital for our region's farms and waterways.

The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) is also a key conservation program for our region's farmers, and we urge you to provide full funding for FY22 at \$1.85 billion. Historically, EQIP has been the primary financial assistance program for conservation in the Chesapeake Bay region.

All six Chesapeake Bay watershed states have participated in the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and this program is the key to restoring riparian buffers that are critical for water quality and wildlife habitat. The 2018 Farm Bill codified CREP and we urge you to ensure that the U.S. Department of Agriculture fully enrolls CREP acres based on the provisions in the 2018 Farm Bill.

As these Farm Bill programs are implemented, it's vital that limited conservation dollars go to the areas of greatest need and impact, including South Central Pennsylvania where many farmers are working to take important steps for clean water but need financial and technical assistance. These types of high priority areas have tremendous downstream impacts.

In addition, we urge you to provide robust funding for Conservation Technical Assistance, which helps to provide the on the ground technical assistance to help farmers who are enrolling in conservation programs. The amount of technical assistance to farmers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed has been eroding over the years, even as the need for this help has increased.

In order to follow a common-sense path to maintain economically viable well-run farms and to have healthy local water and a restored Chesapeake Bay, which is critical for our regional economy, we request full funding for all conservation programs in the Farm Bill for Fiscal Year 2022.

Thank you for your consideration on this very important request to maintain funding for these programs which are critical to both our agricultural community and for clean water throughout the mid-Atlantic region. Please contact Peter J. Marx at 410-905-2515 or peter@chooscleanwater.org with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania
Action Together Northeastern Pennsylvania
Alice Ferguson Foundation
Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay
Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley
American Battlefield Trust
American Canoe Association
American Chestnut Land Trust
American Rivers
Anacostia Watershed Society

Appalachian Voices
Arundel Rivers Federation
Audubon Naturalist Society
Audubon Society of Northern Virginia
Baltimore Green Space
Blue Ridge Watershed Coalition
Butternut Valley Alliance
Cacapon Institute
Canaan Valley Institute
Capital Region Land Conservancy

Catoctin Land Trust
 Catskill Mountainkeeper
 Center for Progressive Reform
 Chapman Forest Foundation
 Chesapeake Bay Foundation
 Chesapeake Conservancy
 Chesapeake Conservation Landscaping
 Council
 Chesapeake Legal Alliance
 Chesapeake Stormwater Network
 Chesapeake Wildlife Heritage
 Clean Fairfax Council
 Clean Water Action
 Cleanwater Liganore, Inc
 Coalition for Smarter Growth
 Conservation Montgomery
 Conservation Voters of Pennsylvania
 Corsica River Conservancy
 Defenders of Wildlife
 Defensores de la Cuenca
 Delaware Nature Society
 Delaware-Otsego Audubon Society
 Earth Conservation Corps
 Earth Force
 Earth Forum of Howard County
 Earthworks
 Eastern Pennsylvania Coalition for
 Abandoned Mine Reclamation
 Eastern Shore Land Conservancy
 Eastern Shore Resource Conservation &
 Development Council
 EcoLatinos
 Elizabeth River Project
 Elks Run Watershed Group
 Environment America
 Environment Maryland
 Environment New York
 Environment Virginia
 Environmental Integrity Project
 Environmental Justice Center of Chestnut
 Hill United Church
 Forever Maryland Foundation
 FracTracker
 Friends of Accotink Creek
 Friends of Little Hunting Creek
 Friends of Lower Beaverdam Creek
 Friends of Nanticoke River
 Friends of Quincy Run
 Friends of Sligo Creek
 Friends of St Clements Bay
 Friends of the Bohemia
 Friends of the Cacapon River
 Friends of the Chemung River Watershed
 Friends of the Middle River
 Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah
 River
 Friends of the Rappahannock
 Friends of the Shenandoah River
 Gunpowder Riverkeeper
 Interfaith Partners for the Chesapeake
 Interfaith Power & Light (MD. DC. NoVA)
 Izaak Walton League of America
 James River Association
 Lackawanna River Conservation
 Association
 Lancaster Clean Water Partners
 Lancaster County Conservancy
 Lancaster Farmland Trust
 Little Falls Watershed Alliance
 Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy
 Lower Shore Land Trust
 Lower Susquehanna Riverkeeper
 Association
 Lynnhaven River NOW
 Maryland Academy of Science at Maryland
 Science Center
 Maryland Campaign for Environmental
 Human Rights
 Maryland Conservation Council
 Maryland League of Conservation Voters
 Mattawoman Watershed Society
 Mid-Atlantic Council Trout Unlimited
 Mid-Atlantic Youth Anglers & Outdoors
 Program
 Mountain Lakes Preservation Alliance
 National Aquarium
 National Parks Conservation Association
 National Wildlife Federation
 Natural Resources Defense Council
 New York League of Conservation Voters
 New York State Council of Trout Unlimited
 Otsego County Conservation Association

Otsego Land Trust
Partnership for Smarter Growth
Patapsco Heritage Greenway
PennEnvironment
PennFuture
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited
Piedmont Environmental Council
Potomac Conservancy
Potomac Riverkeeper
Potomac Riverkeeper Network
Potomac Valley Audubon Society
Preservation Maryland
Prince William Conservation Alliance
Protect Hanover
Queen Anne's Conservation Association
Rachel Carson Council
Restore America's Estuaries
Richmond Audubon Society
Rivanna Conservation Alliance
River Network
Rock Creek Conservancy
Rockfish Valley Foundation
Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.
Scenic Rivers Land Trust
Shenandoah Riverkeeper
ShoreRivers
Sidney Center Improvement Group
Sierra Club - Maryland Chapter
Sierra Club - Pennsylvania Chapter
Sleepy Creek Watershed Association
Southeast Rural Community Assistance
Project
Southern Environmental Law Center

Southern Maryland Audubon Society
SouthWings
St. Mary's River Watershed Association
Surfrider Foundation – DC Chapter
Surfrider Foundation- Virginia Chapter
Susquehanna National Heritage Area
The Downstream Project
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation
Partnership
Transition Howard County
Trash Free Maryland
Trout Unlimited
United Parents Against Lead & Other
Environmental Hazards
Upper Potomac Riverkeeper
Upper Susquehanna Coalition
Upstream Alliance
Virginia Association for Biological Farming
Virginia Conservation Network
Virginia Interfaith Power and Light
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Virginia Organizing
Warm Springs Watershed Association
Waterkeepers Chesapeake
West Virginia Citizens Action Group
West Virginia Environmental Council
West Virginia Highlands Conservancy
West Virginia Interfaith Power & Light
West Virginia Rivers Coalition
West Virginia Wilderness Coalition
Wetlands Watch
Wicomico Environmental Trust
Wild Virginia