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CARDIN, MIKULSKI ANNOUNCE \$23 MILLION FOR CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED INITIATIVE

Funding is part of Farm Bill and will help increase agricultural conservation practices

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD) announced today that \$23 million will be released as part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative, a program included in the 2008 Farm Bill that provides the region’s farmers with assistance to implement agricultural conservation practices.

“This long-delayed funding represents a major investment in Maryland agriculture and in our Bay. Both our farms and Chesapeake Bay will benefit from the numerous conservation practices these funds will pay for,” said **Senator Cardin**, a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. “The farm bill funding that we secured in last year’s legislation represents the largest infusion of federal funds ever for pollution abatement in the Chesapeake Bay. To our farmers, watermen and all who love the Bay, today’s announcement means that help is on the way.”

“The Chesapeake Bay is not only Maryland’s greatest natural resource, it’s part of who we are as Marylanders – our heritage and our culture,” said **Senator Mikulski**. “Maryland communities and farmers want to do right by the Bay, but they can’t do it on their own. Senator Cardin and I fought for these funds in the Farm Bill to give our farmers the know-how and resources to conserve farmland in a way that protects creeks, streams, and rivers from the nutrients and runoff that pollute the watershed and contribute to the decline of the Bay. These conservation measures are a crucial part in restoring the Chesapeake Bay.”

The 2008 Farm Bill provides \$188 million over the next four years to support restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed, which represents one of the largest single federal investments in the clean-up effort and an unprecedented targeting of Farm Bill resources to a specific watershed. Congressionally authorized future funding levels are \$43 million in 2010, \$72 million in 2011 and \$50 million in 2012.

Supported agricultural conservation practices such as nutrient management, cover crops, crop residue management and vegetative buffers will improve water quality, preserve and enhance natural resources, and reduce the pollutants flowing into the streams, creeks and rivers that feed

the Chesapeake Bay.

Technical and financial assistance will be available to eligible landowners to address wetland, wildlife habitat, soil, water and related natural resource concerns on private agricultural land in parts of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. Landowners will also be assisted with planning, designing, implementing and evaluating habitat conservation and restoration.

The agricultural community has made many significant contributions during the past 25 years to improve water quality and habitat. Agriculture remains a key part of the solution to Bay restoration, and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative will provide vital funding to increase necessary conservation practices.

The Chesapeake Bay Program is a unique regional partnership that, since 1983, has coordinated the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. Partners include the states of Delaware, Maryland, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia; the District of Columbia; the Chesapeake Bay Commission, a tri-state legislative body; the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, representing the federal government; and participating advisory groups. For more information, visit www.chesapeakebay.net.

Chesapeake Bay is the largest estuary in North America, with a length of 200 miles and 11,684 miles of tidal shoreline, more than the entire U.S. West Coast. About 100,000 streams and rivers thread through the Chesapeake's 64,000-square-mile watershed, which is home to almost 17 million people. The Chesapeake Bay supports more than 3,600 species of plants, fish and animals.

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