

## PRESIDENT OBAMA SIGNS BALTIMORE HERITAGE AREA ACT INTO LAW

WASHINGTON, D.C. – **U.S. Senators Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-Md.), Maryland Congressmen Elijah E. Cummings, Chris Van Hollen and John Sarbanes, and Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon today celebrated the signing of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 into law. The bipartisan legislation is one of the most important conservation efforts in decades, protecting more than 2 million acres of wilderness and more than 1,000 miles of wild and scenic rivers, creating more than 5,000 miles of national trails, and establishing three new units of the National Park Service.

In Maryland, the bill protects the Baltimore Heritage Area by designating it as a National Park Service National Heritage Area, with up to \$10 million in federal funding over 15 years to develop education programs and exhibits and protect and restore Baltimore's historic sites. Senator Mikulski first introduced the Baltimore National Heritage Area Act last February, and was joined by Team Maryland colleagues Senator Cardin, and Congressmen Elijah E. Cummings, Chris Van Hollen and John Sarbanes in fighting to include it in the final Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 bill.

“I am proud to be from a city with such a rich heritage and culture as Baltimore. This bill honors our key role in American history for generations to come,” said Senator Mikulski. “We need this federal investment to preserve Baltimore's national treasures and Maryland's historical integrity.”

“The Baltimore National Heritage Area presents a wonderful opportunity to showcase our rich historic and cultural heritage,” said Senator Cardin. “From Fort McHenry to the U.S.S. Constellation to the home of Frederick Douglass, Baltimore is one of our nation's premier historic cities, and this federal designation will enable Marylanders and all Americans to honor and treasure our past.”

“I have spent my entire life surrounded by the rich history and diverse cultures that embody the lifeblood of Baltimore City,” Congressman Cummings said. “This federal investment in our heritage will further ensure that we can safeguard these fortunes for generations to come.”

“This legislation allows us to protect an important piece of Maryland's rich history and preserve our State's heritage for future generations,” said Congressman Van Hollen.

“The passage of this law will help preserve Baltimore's rich history so that generations to come will have the opportunity to learn about the city's place in the American story,” said Congressman Sarbanes.

“On behalf of the people of Baltimore, I thank the members of Baltimore's Congressional Delegation for giving Baltimore the designation as a National Heritage Area,” said Baltimore Mayor Sheila Dixon. “With the bicentennial of the War of 1812 on the

horizon, this national designation is a fitting acknowledgement of Baltimore's contribution to the American identity. This designation will support our local economy by bringing in Federal dollars to strengthen and protect our cultural and historic jewels that tell our story to the world."

National Historic Areas are congressionally designated cultural and historical places of national significance. These areas receive technical and financial assistance from the National Park Service in order to preserve their history and increase tourism. The Baltimore Heritage Area will be able to use these funds to develop educational exhibits and programs, and protect and restore historic sites and buildings.

The Baltimore Heritage Area is home to 24 national historic landmarks, more than 53,000 buildings in National Register historic districts, more than 8,000 buildings in local historic districts, 13 Chesapeake Bay Gateways, five Maryland Scenic Byways and an All-American Road. The heritage area includes such neighborhoods as Druid Hill Park, Fells Point, Oliver, Jonestown, Little Italy, Mount Vernon, Canton, Patterson Park, Jones Falls Valley and Locust Point.

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