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MARYLAND AND VIRGINIA SENATORS INTRODUCE BILL TO SUPPORT CHESAPEAKE BAY CLEAN-UP

Strengthens NOAA's data collection, resource management & public outreach

Washington, DC – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** and **Barbara A. Mikulski** (both D-MD), along with Senators **Mark R. Warner** and **Jim Webb** (both D-VA) today introduced the **Chesapeake Bay Science, Education and Ecosystem Enhancement Act of 2009**, which would strengthen and enhance the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) role in the multi-state Chesapeake Bay clean-up effort.

The bill focuses the relevant science, research and resource management capabilities of NOAA, enhancing its commitment to scientific data collection, the development of fishery management practices and habitat restoration, and the legislation also seeks to strengthen NOAA's environmental outreach programs.

“All of our federal partners need to accelerate their Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts. This legislation will strengthen NOAA's abilities to provide world-class science and living resource management in the Bay,” said **Senator Cardin**, Chairman of the Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee. “While EPA leads the effort to restore water quality in the Bay and its tributaries, this bill will allow NOAA to put increased attention to restoring our oyster, blue crab and the other living resources that make the Chesapeake a national environmental treasure.”

“The Chesapeake Bay is a national treasure - and Maryland's greatest natural resource. For 20 years, I've been fighting to restore the health of the Bay and the lives and livelihoods that depend on it. But progress will depend on the coordination, collaboration and cooperation of many regional partners. Everyone must get involved. With its unique science, research and data collection capabilities, NOAA has a critical role to play in federal Bay clean-up efforts. This bill will utilize NOAA's know-how and strengthen its role as a partner in Bay clean-up – ultimately bringing us closer to a brighter future for the Bay,” said **Senator Mikulski**, Chairwoman of the Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations Subcommittee that funds NOAA.

“This legislation will extend NOAA's environmental education efforts, promoting effective partnerships with working watermen and with the environmental community,” **Senator Warner** said. “Strengthening NOAA's ability to collect relevant data will have broad applications for our collective efforts to restore the Bay.”

“NOAA has proven to be a vital resource to the Chesapeake Bay, providing important scientific data on the progress of restoration efforts and environmental conditions there,” said **Senator Webb**. “In order to successfully improve the health of the Bay, we must provide NOAA with the appropriate federal resources to continue to strengthen its revitalization efforts.”

The bill includes four primary objectives:

- Increases collaboration between the various programs and activities at NOAA to further NOAA’s coastal resource stewardship mission.
- Authorizes the Chesapeake Bay Interpretative Buoy system, is a system of buoys that reports real-time weather and environmental information such as wind speed, temperature, and wave height. The buoys also provide information about John Smith’s adventures during his 1608 voyage.
- Strengthens the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training Program which is a competitively based program that supports existing environmental education programs, fosters the growth of new programs, and encourages the development of partnerships among environmental education programs throughout the entire Chesapeake Bay watershed. This program furthers NOAA’s commitment to educational programs.
- Assists watermen on the Chesapeake by expanding technical assistance that NOAA offers on helping the watermen develop aquaculture programs. The bill expands the expertise the NOAA offers beyond native oyster populations to include fish and shellfish aquaculture. It also promotes submerged aquatic vegetation propagation programs which act as natural filters for the Chesapeake Bay.

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