



Local governments working together for a better metropolitan region

April 13, 2005

District of Columbia

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Frederick County

Gaithersburg

Greenbelt

Montgomery County

Prince George's County

Rockville

Takoma Park

Alexandria

Arlington County

Fairfax

Fairfax County

Falls Church

Loudoun County

Manassas

Manassas Park

Prince William County

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Chairman
The Honorable David R. Obey, Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Room H-218, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Federal funding for the proposed Chesapeake Bay Financing Authority

Dear Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Obey:

I am writing on behalf of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG) and its 19 member local jurisdictions to request your support for full federal funding of a regional *Chesapeake Bay Finance Authority*. For our local streams, rivers, and the Chesapeake Bay to make a full recovery from serious declines in water quality, substantial reductions in pollutant loadings must be implemented. Considering the multi-billion dollar cost of this effort, a regional financing approach with significant increases in federal clean water appropriations is needed.

On January 10, 2005, the Chesapeake Executive Council, the cooperative partnership among the governors of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the Mayor of the District of Columbia, the U.S. EPA Administrator, and the Chair of the tri-state legislative body, the Chesapeake Bay Commission, agreed to move forward with the recommendations of a special Chesapeake Bay Blue Ribbon Finance Panel. The Panel issued several recommendations, the centerpiece of which was the creation of a *Chesapeake Bay Financing Authority* capitalized with \$12 billion in federal funds and \$3 billion in state funds, the same ratio of matching funds legislated by existing State Revolving Loan Funds across the country. As proposed, the Authority would be capitalized by federal funds over a six-year period, with an initial appropriation of \$1 billion in fiscal year 2006.

As correctly stated in the Panel's report, "business as usual will not accomplish the task before us." At the local level, the Metropolitan Washington region has led efforts to reduce pollution entering local waters and the Chesapeake Bay by investing hundreds of millions of local dollars to upgrade all of the major wastewater treatment plants in the region with advanced treatment, and by implementing some of the most innovative urban stormwater programs in the nation. Increased federal clean water appropriations are needed now to match increases in local and state funding so we can meet the demands being placed on our clean water infrastructure – wastewater treatment plants and stormwater management programs – to reduce pollution and maintain water quality. The only way we will be able to continue making progress in reducing water pollution is through a shared commitment to provide adequate clean water funding at the local, state, and federal levels.

Thank you for your favorable consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you and other members of Congress to insure that the clean water needs of the Metropolitan Washington region and the Chesapeake Bay are met.

Sincerely,

Judith F. Davis, Chair, Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments Board of Directors
Mayor, City of Greenbelt