



**FY 2023 FEDERAL BUDGET  
COMMITTEE NARRATIVE AND APPROPRIATION LANGUAGE RELATED TO THE  
CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED**

**Interior, Environment and Related Agencies**

**Environmental Protection Agency**

Geographic Programs – Chesapeake Bay

(Conference) Chesapeake Bay.-From the total amount provided, at least \$10,000,000 is for nutrient and sediment removal grants, at least \$10,000,000 is for small watershed grants to control polluted runoff from urban, suburban and agricultural lands, and at least \$8,000,000 is for state-based implementation in the most effective basins. (\$92M was the total amount provided)

**Department of Interior - US Fish and Wildlife Service**

WILD Act

(House) The recommendation also provides \$15,000,000 for the Chesapeake WILD grant program for a new call for proposals to achieve Chesapeake WILD Program goals of restoring water quality and habitats in the Chesapeake Bay. The Service is reminded of the directive in fiscal year 2022 to brief the Committee on the framework, staffing, criteria for grants, and monitoring established for this new grant program.

(Conference) \$8M with the House report language retained.

**Department of Interior - National Park Service**

(Conference) Chesapeake Bay Office.-The Service is a lead implementing partner for four goals (land conservation, public access, citizen stewardship, and education) of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The National Park Service Chesapeake Bay office has continued, despite funding challenges, to expand its activities and responsibilities related to expanding public access to the Bay and serves as the lead agency on several multi-State and Federal conservation goals as a part of the 2014 Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement. The Committees support operational funding for the Chesapeake Bay Office in order to meet the conservation and public access goals established by the Bay Watershed Agreement.

**Energy and Water Development**

**US Army - Corps of Engineers**

(House) Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery, Maryland and Virginia.—The Committee is supportive of the Corps' work on the Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery program and urges the Corps to include appropriate funding in future budget submissions for these efforts.

(Conference) Chesapeake Bay Comprehensive Water Resources and Restoration Plan. --The Corps is reminded that the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection Program and the

Chesapeake Bay Oyster Recovery Program are eligible to compete for the additional funding provided in this account, and the Corps is encouraged to provide appropriate funding in future budget requests.

(Conference) River Basin Commissions.—The agreement provides funds under the River Basin Commission line item to meet the federal government's equitable funding requirements pursuant to the Delaware River Basin Compact. The Congress has made clear its intent that the Susquehanna, Delaware, and Potomac River Basin Commissions be supported, and the Corps is encouraged to budget accordingly in future budget submissions. The Corps is directed to provide to the Committees not later than 90 days after enactment of this Act a briefing describing the reasons why funds have not been provided to these commissions since 2015.

### **Agriculture, Rural Development, Food & Drug Administration and Related Agencies**

#### **USDA-Natural Resource Conservation Service**

(House) Chesapeake Bay States' Partnership Initiative.—The committee recognizes the important role of voluntary conservation practices in protecting and restoring waterways, especially when deployed at scale. To enhance the resiliency of farmland and reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in line with the most recent Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement, the Department created the Chesapeake Bay States' Partnership Initiative. The Committee supports the Department's creation of this Initiative and directs the Department to leverage additional conservation resources for agricultural producers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Committee additionally urges the Department to target additional Conservation Technical Assistance funds in the most effective basin areas of the watershed.

(House) Farmer Mentorship Program for Watershed.—The Committee is concerned about soil and water quality near watersheds such as the Great Lakes Basin, Salton Sea, Lake Okechobee, and the Chesapeake Bay. The Committee recognizes that farmers may be unaware of possible or necessary conservation efforts that currently exist to improve the soil and water quality. The Committee encourages NRCS to leverage its recently created CAMP mentoring effort to enhance outreach efforts with dedicated farmers in watersheds with conservation expertise to work with interested farmers who would like to learn how to implement improved conservation practices for water and soil in their operations.

(House) Phragmites.—The Committee is concerned about the damage caused by phragmites in the Chesapeake Bay and provides \$1 million from within the funds provided and directs NRCS to work with relevant state agencies to provide funding and technical assistance to control phragmites in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

#### **USDA-Food Safety and Inspection Service**

(Conference) The Secretary is urged to work with the states in the Chesapeake Bay area to assist fishermen and processors dealing with invasive blue catfish.

(Conference) This amount includes an additional \$10,000,000 to continue the reduced user fees for small and very small establishments. The Act also includes \$2,800,000 to address the persistently high levels of public health veterinarian vacancies and up to \$1,000,000 for the inspection of wild caught invasive species in the order Siluriformes and family Ictaluridae, including blue catfish in the Chesapeake Bay.

## Defense

(House) Stormwater Management Projects.—The Committee recognizes that resilient built and natural infrastructure on and around military bases are essential in maintaining military readiness. The Committee also recognizes the increasing variability of the frequency and intensity of precipitation globally and the need to mitigate flooding and runoff. The Committee supports the implementation of stormwater best management practices, but recognizes there is currently no dedicated, authorized DOD entity that prioritizes stormwater management projects on and off military installations. Therefore, the Committee directs the Department to conduct a feasibility study and submit a report no later than 180 days after enactment of this Act assessing the potential creation of a program that prioritizes stormwater management projects in order to enhance resilience and improve water quality in stormwater-stressed ecosystems, where the Department has restoration partnership obligations, and where land subsidence and the expansion of non-permeable surfaces exacerbate flooding on and around military bases. Additionally, the Committee applauds states and localities that utilize current precipitation data to inform the design of stormwater management features that are built to address current and future needs.

(House) The Committee recommendation includes \$175,000,000 for the Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative (REPI) and notes the importance of REPI and Sentinel Landscape Partnerships to the successful land and wildlife conservation activities on land buffering military installations. The Committee recognizes the important role the Department of Defense plays as a federal partner in multi-state watershed restoration projects and the importance of the REPI program in advancing a critical military goal of limiting encroachment and land use conflicts. The Committee also is aware of the importance of deploying stormwater best management practices on and around military bases to mitigate flooding and runoff, especially in stormwater-stressed ecosystems. The Committee directs the Secretary of Defense to prioritize REPI projects that leverage other federal and non-federal funding sources to deploy best management practices on lands conserved through REPI to enhance resilience and improve water quality in watersheds where the Department of Defense has restoration partnership obligations and where land subsidence compounds the threat of sea level rise and associated flooding.

*Prepared 1/3/2023: J. Gleason and M. Hoffman*