

WASHINGTON - Congressman Steny Hoyer (D-MD) today announced that \$1.5 million was included in the fiscal year 2005 Interior Appropriations bill for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network Grants. A wide variety of projects and programs throughout Maryland's 5th Congressional District have benefited from this grant program since its creation by Congress in 1998. Congressman Hoyer is the only U.S. Representative from Maryland on the House Appropriations Committee.

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, which includes more than 120 museums, state parks, wildlife refuges, Indian reservations, water trails and other sites in five states and the District of Columbia, was created through the vision of Senator Paul Sarbanes to enhance the experience of visitors to the Chesapeake Bay and its many roads, rivers and trails.

"I have been proud to fight with Senator Sarbanes to secure federal funds for the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network program in each of the years since the program's inception," said Congressman Hoyer. "During the past five years, Gateways Network grants have funded new maps, improved signs, and expanded trails that have made visits to parks, wildlife refuges and water trails even more exciting and enjoyable than they had previously been.

"This \$1.5 million in federal funds demonstrates a recognition by the Congress of the importance of supporting programs that enhance our national treasures. The Network cannot continue its quality work to make the Chesapeake Bay, and the entire region, the treasure that we know it to be today without this federal commitment and I will continue to fight for increased funding for this important grant program.

"I am grateful to the Network for their work to conserve and restore the Bay's natural environment by helping the 10 million annual visitors to network sites better understand and appreciate the Bay's storied history. I look forward to our continued partnership to preserve and enhance the natural and historical resources in our state."

While Gateways are managed by a variety of different organizations, the overall Network is coordinated jointly by the National Park Service and the Chesapeake Bay Program. The Bay Program, a partnership of Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, the District of Columbia, the Bay Commission and the Federal government, works to restore the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries.

Last year, seven grants were made to Gateways throughout Maryland's 5th Congressional District including Flag Ponds Nature Park & King's Landing Park in Calvert County, Jefferson Patterson Park and Museum in St. Leonard, Patuxent Research Refuge National Wildlife Visitor Center in Laurel, Piscataway Park and Fort Washington Park in Accokeek, Point Lookout State Park in Scotland, Solomons Regional Information Center in Solomons and Sotterley Plantation in Hollywood.

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