

WASHINGTON – Congressman Steny Hoyer, a senior member of the House Appropriations Committee and the only member from Maryland, today announced that the House of Representatives passed the Fiscal Year 2006 Energy and Water Appropriations Bill last night which included \$15.2 million for Baltimore Harbor maintenance dredging and \$13.4 for the Poplar Island Project. At Congressman Hoyer's request, the federal funding for the Baltimore Harbor dredging was increased by \$200,000 over last years funding.

"The Port of Baltimore is a significant economic engine for our state and as a member of the Appropriations Committee, I am pleased that I have been able to work for the past several years to ensure that the Congress maintains its long-standing commitment to the Baltimore Harbor," said Congressman Hoyer. "The Harbor presently supports nearly 115,400 jobs in the State of Maryland, generates more than \$1.4 billion for the State and regional economies and represents one-tenth of Maryland's gross state product.

"As we are faced with heightened homeland security concerns at the major ports throughout the nation, it is critical that we continue to ensure that points of entry like the Baltimore Harbor are maintained to insure their continued viability. I am pleased that this bill reaffirms Congress' long-standing history of supporting this important dredging project to insure the viability of Baltimore as a major port," Hoyer added.

The Army Corps of Engineers will receive \$15.2 million for work on the Baltimore Harbor, to continue its dredging of approximately 2.5 million cubic yards of material annually to maintain the deep channels in the Baltimore District each year so that large shipping vessels boats can navigate the channels.

In addition, the Poplar Island Beneficial Use Project will benefit from \$13.4 million in funding. Over the past eight years, Congressman Hoyer has worked to secure more than \$130 million in funding for the Poplar Island project. This project, which has helped the Army Corps address the critical issue of disposal of dredge materials from the Baltimore Harbor, is also the largest environmental restoration project undertaken by the Army Corps of Engineers. Poplar Island was recently on the verge of disappearing, but is today a national model for habitat restoration and the beneficial use of dredged material. When completed, an 1100-acre wildlife sanctuary, including wetlands and bird nesting habitats, will have been created. The total federal cost of the project is estimated at \$254 million. Construction began in 1998 and the project is expected to be completed by 2020.

Hoyer Announces Federal Funds to Keep Baltimore Harbor Open for Business

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“I am pleased to support a project that has turned the dredge spoils from the Baltimore Harbor into a wildlife sanctuary for many species of wildlife native to the Chesapeake, including eagles, osprey, heron, egret, and the diamondback terrapin,” concluded Hoyer.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is responsible for maintaining the federal channels used by ships and watermen in the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries, including the Baltimore Harbor. The dredge materials are barged to Poplar Island where over time, it will help to restore the island.

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