

Washington, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (MD-D) announced that the fiscal year 2008 Commerce, Science and Justice Appropriations bill, approved by the House of Representatives yesterday, included federal funds for programs that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay. The funds come on top of \$31.65 million included in the previously passed Interior-Environmental Appropriations bill and \$2 million in the House Energy and Water Appropriations bill.

“The federal government is a committed partner in helping restore and preserve the Chesapeake Bay,” stated Rep. Hoyer. “I am pleased to report that this legislation includes \$5.5 million for several priority programs for the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. It is only through the sustained support of all partners that we can address the serious environmental challenges facing the Bay and restore the health of this magnificent estuary.”

Congressman Hoyer helped secure funding for the following list of programs that will benefit the Chesapeake Bay.

Chesapeake Bay Studies - \$3,071,000 to support the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) Chesapeake Bay Restoration efforts. The NOAA Chesapeake Bay Office plays a vital role in directing research in fisheries stock assessments, multi-species ecosystem-based management, habitat restoration, and scientific data management. Funds will also be used for the Network for Education of Municipal Officials to provide grants and support to the over 1,650 local governments in the Chesapeake Bay watershed for access for improve land-use planning.

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) Program - \$1,000,000 to educate young people living throughout the watershed about the importance of sustaining our coastal environment and the Chesapeake Bay. The B-WET Program was established in 2002 to improve the understanding of environmental stewardship for students and teachers in the classroom.

Chesapeake Bay Oyster Habitat Restoration - \$842,000 for oyster bar and native oyster aquaculture in the Chesapeake Bay. Due to disease, pollution, and over fishing, bay oyster populations are only about two percent of their levels just a century ago and in order to restore the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay, oyster restoration must be undertaken on a much larger scale. The development of oyster aquaculture is a new step for NOAA, but one that could

be critical to a viable commercial oyster industry. Both of these objectives are part of a multi-agency 10-year investment to restore oyster populations and the health of the Chesapeake Bay. This effort will receive \$50 million in state funding from both Maryland and Virginia over the course of the ten years.

Morgan State University Estuarine Research Center- Oyster Hatchery Economic Pilot Program - \$500,000 to develop a pilot program at Morgan State University's Estuarine Research Center in St. Leonard, Maryland to help find market based solutions to replenish the oyster population. This vital program is a key part of the Center's two-fold effort to maintain the viability of Maryland's watermen while restoring the once plentiful oyster population in the Bay. By developing a means to produce a revenue source on a more predictable schedule, this project will help stabilize a declining industry and provide the means to stabilize the social and cultural foundation of many waterfront communities, not to mention significantly improve the overall health of the Bay.

Alliance for Coastal Technologies (ACT) - \$2,000,000 to allow ACT to expand its critically important work in coastal resource management, marine research, and coastal equipment evaluation. Headquartered in Solomons, MD, ACT is a partnership of eight research institutions across the country, including the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, that works with NOAA to develop integrated marine observing systems and forecast systems that benefit environmental managers and all coastal users.

The House Commerce, Science and Justice Appropriations bill must now be reconciled with the Senate appropriations bill, before returning to the House for a final vote.

[Bill Summary](#)

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Hoyer Announces Major Federal Funding for the Chesapeake Bay

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