

WASHINGTON, DC – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) hailed passage of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) of 2007 Conference Report, which authorizes more than \$180 million for several projects important to the environmental and economic health of Maryland and the Fifth Congressional District. As a leading steward of the region's waterways, Congressman Hoyer worked to help ensure the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries were made a priority in the legislation.

Overall, the WRDA authorizes roughly 900 water resource development projects and studies by the Army Corps of Engineers for flood control, navigation, and environmental restoration. The Senate must now pass the conference report bill before it is sent to the President's desk.

"This legislation provides the Army Corps of Engineers with the authority and the ability to continue the coordinated efforts to cleanup the Chesapeake Bay by investing in programs to improve waterway infrastructure, restore the oyster population, and ensure water quality," stated Congressman Hoyer. "Further, the bill authorizes the Corps to move forward on restoration of the Anacostia River Watershed and the Potomac River Basin as well as other critical water projects in the region. These projects are important not only to improve our region's water quality, but will also help to ensure that these waterways are operational for recreational and economic purposes."

The Water Resources and Development Act includes the authorizations for the following initiatives:

Chesapeake Bay Watershed Restoration

In October 2004, the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Blue Ribbon Finance Panel concluded in its final report that "...restoring the Chesapeake Bay will require a large-scale national and regional approach, capitalized by federal and state governments and directed according to a watershed-wide strategy." As the lead Federal agency in water resource management, the Army Corps of Engineers has a vital role to play in this effort.

- Increases authorized level for the Chesapeake Bay Environmental Restoration and Protection Program from \$10 million to \$40 million to provide design and construction assistance to State and local authorities in the environmental restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

- Increases authorized level for Chesapeake Bay Oyster Restoration from \$30 million to \$50 million.
- Authorizes \$30 million for environmental infrastructure projects to benefit the Chesapeake Bay, including the nutrient removal project at the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment facility in the District of Columbia.
- Authorizes \$40 million for water pollution control in the Chesapeake Bay Region, Maryland and Virginia.
- Authorizes \$260 million for the continued expansion of the Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project at Poplar Island.

Anacostia River Restoration

The Anacostia River is one of the most degraded rivers in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and in the Nation. It is a resource that has long been abused and neglected, but one that can be protected and restored. Through a cooperative and coordinated federal, state, local and private effort, progress has been made in the past ten years in restoring the watershed. The Army Corps of Engineers has played a key role in improving tidal water flow through the marsh, reducing the concentration of nitrogen and phosphorus, and restoring wetlands.

- Authorizes \$20 million for environmental infrastructure and resource protection and development in the Anacostia Watershed.
- Directs the Army Corps of Engineers, in coordination with the Mayor of Washington, D.C., the Governor of Maryland, and the County Executives from Prince George's and Montgomery counties, and other interested entities to develop a 10-year comprehensive action plan for the restoration and protection of the ecological integrity of the Anacostia River and its tributaries within one year of enactment.

Potomac River Watershed

The Potomac River is the centerpiece of a nearly 15,000 square-mile watershed that is home to roughly five million people. Each day the river and its tributaries supply about 500 million gallons of fresh drinking water to more than five million people in four states and the District of Columbia. The river is an invaluable natural resource for every individual within the watershed.

- Enables the Secretary to participate in the Potomac River Watershed Assessment and Tributary Strategy Evaluation and Monitoring Program to monitor the effectiveness of the agreed upon tributary strategies and other policies pertaining to the resource protection of the Potomac River watershed.

Streambank Protection in St. Mary's County

Erosion of river streambanks threatens river ecosystems and can imperil public infrastructure. Streambank protection projects place material along or beside banks to prevent erosion in order to preserve the greatest degree of natural stream and floodplain function.

- Authorizes funding for an emergency streambank protection at Piney Point Lighthouse in St. Mary's County.

- Authorizes funding for streambank protection on the St. Mary's River at St. Mary's College of Maryland.

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