

[Watch Congressman Hoyer's floor statement here](#)

WASHINGTON, D.C - Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) praised passage today of H.R. 5540 to permanently authorize funding for the [Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network](#) grant program. The Network ties together more than 156 museums, state parks, wildlife refuges, Indian reservations, water trails, and other sites in six states and the District of Columbia, to enable visitors to appreciate the far-reaching role the Bay has had in the culture and history of the region. Last year, Maryland's Congressional delegation helped to secure \$1.65 million for the program.

“Those of us fortunate to live in this region have been blessed with a multitude of magnificent natural resources, not the least of which is our nation's largest estuary - the Chesapeake Bay, a body of water that has played such an important role in shaping the cultural, economic, political, and social history of our region,” **stated Congressman Hoyer.**

“Unfortunately, the Chesapeake Bay of 2008 is not the pristine body that Captain John Smith first charted on his expeditions some 400 years ago. The Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network is a critical component to fostering an appreciation and understanding of the important role citizens have in helping to ensure the Bay's survival.”

The Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network program allocates matching grants of \$5,000 to \$50,000 for projects that advance Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network goals. Past Network grants have funded new maps, improved signs, and expanded trails that have helped enhance the public's ability to learn about and enjoy the Bay's natural and cultural resources, and empower citizens to be good stewards of the this great national treasure.

Twenty-five of the 156 gateway sites are within Rep. Hoyer's 5th Congressional District, including Piscataway Park, Smallwood State Park, St. Clements Island-Potomac River Museum, Historic St. Mary's City, Point Lookout State Park, Calvert Cliffs State Park, Sotterly Plantation and Chesapeake Biological Laboratory.

In addition to today's legislation, Congressman Hoyer and the Maryland delegation have successfully increased the federal commitment to improving the health of the Bay in the 110th Congress. In addition to the recently passed Farm bill with \$438 million in conservation funding for the Bay, the 2007 WRDA bill strengthened the ability of the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake Bay oyster restoration, water pollution control, and environmental infrastructure projects.

For more information on the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Water Trails Network, visit www.baygateways.net/index.cfm

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