

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

We write to express our support for efforts to restore and protect the Delaware River Watershed. We specifically request that the Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies includes robust funding for the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program in its FY 2018 Appropriations Act.

Congress affirmed the importance of protecting the natural resources of the Delaware River Watershed when it passed, with bipartisan support and leadership, the Delaware River Basin Conservation Act in December 2016. This important legislation directed the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program, a non-regulatory effort that will leverage private investment, regional partnerships, and local knowledge to protect and restore the resources of the watershed.

The Delaware River Basin is the four-state region that drains into the Delaware River. Along with its historic importance for our nation, the river basin is a powerhouse for the economy and home to more than 8 million people. Significantly, the watershed serves as the source of clean drinking water for over 15 million people, or roughly five percent of the U.S. population, in the densely populated Mid-Atlantic region. The Delaware River Basin also generates \$25 billion in annual economic activity, including agriculture, recreation and eco-tourism, hunting and fishing, port benefits, commercial fishing, and it supports at least 600,000 jobs with over \$10 billion in annual wages.

As America's first great water, the Delaware River Basin is a historical icon that is home to nationally significant ecological and recreational assets, including one of the country's most visited national parks, the Delaware Water Gap. It also hosts more than 400 miles of National Wild and Scenic Rivers, six National Wildlife Refuges, and one of the largest systems in the National Estuary Program. The basin provides \$21 billion worth of ecosystem services each year, including air and water filtration, nutrient recycling, flood and stormwater control, soil conservation, and globally significant habitat for migratory birds and resident and migratory fish species.

While we are hopeful that the Trump Administration will include the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program in its budget proposal in the future, it is incumbent on this Congress to follow through on its intent when it authorized the program just last year and provide robust funding sufficient to get this important program started on the right foot. To ensure a healthy Delaware River Watershed for generations to come, we urge you to strongly support the Delaware River Basin Restoration Program in the FY 2018 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

Sincerely,




RYAN A. COSTELLO
Member of Congress



BRENDAN F. BOYLE
Member of Congress



PATRICK MEEHAN
Member of Congress



ROBERT A. BRADY
Member of Congress



FRANK A. LOBIONDO
Member of Congress



BONNIE WATSON COLEMAN
Member of Congress



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH
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JOSH GOTTHEIMER
Member of Congress



TOM MACARTHUR
Member of Congress



DONALD NORCROSS
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LEONARD LANCE
Member of Congress



LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER
Member of Congress



JOHN J. FASO
Member of Congress



BRIAN K. FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress