

CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

December 5, 2007



The Honorable Harry Reid
Senate Majority Leader
S-221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leader
S-230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510-7010



The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515-6501

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
House Majority Leader
H-107 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515-6501



The Honorable John A. Boehner
House Minority Leader
H-204 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515-6537

Dear Senate Majority Leader Reid, Senate Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, House Majority Leader Hoyer, and House Minority Leader Boehner:



Our States represent a diverse blend of geography, business interests and demographics, but we share a strong commitment to the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay and its 64,000 square mile watershed. We also share a commitment to a strong agricultural sector, which is central to each respective economy, culture and environment. For these very important reasons, we call upon you to finalize a 2007 Farm Bill that balances and meets the needs of our farming communities and the fragile ecosystem of the Chesapeake Bay.



Because agricultural best management practices are some of the most cost-effective means to restore water quality, over half of our goals for reducing pollution into the Chesapeake depend on agriculture. At the same time, however, our farmers compete in a national and increasingly international market. They need assistance to implement more advanced conservation measures if agriculture is to survive in the watershed and continue to contribute to the region's economy, environment and way of life. Therefore, our States leaders have made increased agricultural funding a priority, but a major boost in federal conservation funding in the next Farm Bill is vital to fulfilling this priority for our farmers and the Bay.



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The Farm Bill will guide the operation of the nation's agricultural, rural development, soil and water conservation, and domestic and foreign food aid programs for the next five years. Please ensure that this critical legislation includes the strongest possible conservation funding levels, is adopted, and is sent to the President before the end of the calendar year. A Farm Bill that supports our agricultural community is good for America and good for the Chesapeake Bay. We look forward to your strong leadership in bringing about a timely and successful outcome.

Sincerely,

Governor Martin J. O'Malley
Maryland

Governor Edward G. Rendell
Pennsylvania

Governor Timothy M. Kaine
Virginia

Governor Ruth Ann Minner
Delaware

Mayor Adrian M. Fenty
District of Columbia

Delegate James W. Hubbard
Chair, Chesapeake Bay Commission

cc: The Honorable Saxby Chambliss
The Honorable Tom Harkin
The Honorable Bob Goodlatte
The Honorable Colin Peterson