

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES OF NEW YORK
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
TROUT UNLIMITED
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY

June 14, 2010

The Honorable Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

There are over 1.4 million hunters and anglers from New York, many of whom fish and hunt on, or near the Chesapeake and its many tributaries. In order for this, and future generations of hunters and anglers to continue to enjoy the rich bounty of the Chesapeake region we ask for your support of an important piece of legislation: The Chesapeake Clean Water and Ecosystem Restoration Act (S. 1816). Introduced in October by Senator Ben Cardin, this bill addresses many of the pressing sources of pollution entering all of the waterways in the Chesapeake region, while providing increased opportunities for restoration of key habitats. We urge you to support this bill when the Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) marks up clean water legislation later this month.

Our organizations have been working closely with Senator Cardin, and he has strengthened habitat portions of the bill for freshwater fish, migratory waterfowl and terrestrial species, and as importantly added language to improve hunter and angler access to resource lands. We strongly urge you to support the pollution reducing provisions already in the bill and the new provisions regarding habitat and public access that will be included in a revised Chesapeake bill for markup in EPW.

S. 1816 provides a tremendous opportunity to fund many local restoration projects throughout the Southern Tier of New York, which will provide critical habitat for wildlife and filter harmful pollutants that have led to stream impairments and massive “dead zones” downstream in Chesapeake Bay. Much of this work will not only benefit local wildlife but will be a key for natural resources throughout North America.

Seventy to eighty percent of the Atlantic stocks of striped bass rely on the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries for their spawning and nursery areas. Coastal waters from Virginia to Maine, including those off of Long Island, rely on the Chesapeake for the vast majority of their striped bass stocks. This bill targets improving water quality in spawning and nursery areas that are critical to a healthy and robust Atlantic population of striped bass. Special designated uses and water quality standards in the Chesapeake were developed specifically for striped bass spawning habitat. In addition, the Chesapeake region is a critical winter stopover for about one million ducks, geese and swans in the Atlantic Flyway – roughly one-third of all the waterfowl wintering along the Atlantic coast. Still others winter south and

return to the Bay region each spring to breed. Habitat and other provisions in the Cardin bill are key to maintaining healthy populations of these fish and waterfowl.

Again, we strongly urge you to support the provisions of S. 1816. This legislation will dramatically reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in the Chesapeake watershed, and will restore and maintain healthy populations of fish and wildlife throughout the region and beyond.

Sincerely,

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