

## HOUSE PASSES BILL FOR CHESAPEAKE BAY -- June 5, 2008

Castle says funds will improve area roads, trails, and water access points

Washington, DC -- Today, Rep. Michael N. Castle (R-DE) supported the House passage of H.R. 5540, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Continuing Authorization Act, which would provide permanent reauthorization for a system of roads, land and water trails, and water access points along the Chesapeake Bay. Specifically, the legislation provides grants and technical assistance to parks, volunteer groups, wildlife refuges, historic sites, museums, and water trails throughout the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The bill passed the House with strong bipartisan support and is also widely supported by local officials and the Bay state governors.

"Since 2000, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network has grown to include 156 gateways in 6 states and D.C., including Trap Pond State Park in Delaware, and fosters educational opportunities around the rich ecology and history of the watershed," said Rep. Castle. "The Network positively contributes to the restoration goals of the Chesapeake Bay. With continued support for the Network and providing access to these sites, we can help develop the next generation of environmental stewards, which is our best hope for actually saving this national treasure."

Additional support for the bay was included in the recently enacted Farm Bill which included \$438 million for Chesapeake Bay protection and restoration, including \$188 million for river restoration projects for water quality, and restoration and enhancement of wildlife in the bay's watershed.

Last August, Rep. Castle visited Trap Pond State Park in Delaware to congratulate them for receiving a \$25,000 grant and officially joining the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network. Rep. Castle is a long time advocate of environmental initiatives as well as a co-chair of the Congressional Delaware River Basin Task Force and member of Member of the Congressional Chesapeake Bay Watershed Task Force. Furthermore, Rep. Castle has partnered with Rep. Wayne Gilchrest (R-MD), from Delaware's neighboring Eastern Shore, MD, to cosponsor legislation, the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Enhancement Act, that will improve the odds of successfully removing the Chesapeake Bay from the list of impaired water bodies under the Clean Water Act.

Background: The Chesapeake Bay's Watershed covers a 64,000 square mile area including parts of Delaware, Pennsylvania, Maryland, West Virginia, New York, Virginia, and D.C. The Chesapeake Bay Program was created in 1983 by the governors of Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia and the mayor of D.C. in cooperation with the EPA to help restore the Chesapeake Bay Waterways. In 2004, the National Park Service completed a Chesapeake Bay Special Resources study, which recommended the Gateways Program be made permanent and expanded. In 2005, the program was recognized by the White House Conference on Cooperative Conservation as a "cooperative conservation" success story. There is still a tremendous need for both the grant and technical assistance made available through the Gateways

Program to improve public access, education and interpretation, and stewardship of the natural, historical, and cultural resources in the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay Watershed.

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