

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2016

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior
Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

Estuaries are one of the most productive habitats on earth, but are increasingly affected by impacts of human population growth along the coast. In 1987, Congress established the National Estuary Program (NEP) to identify, protect, and restore “estuaries of national significance.” Now located within 28 different watersheds, the National Estuary Program is recognized as a model for building partnerships to protect the coastal environment, sustaining coastal economies and the jobs that come with it, and improving our quality of life.

We are writing to thank you for your past support of the NEP, and ask you to continue to invest directly in the stewardship of our nation’s coasts by ensuring that each of the 28 NEPs in the field receives level funding of \$600,000 in FY 2017.

Each National Estuary Program:

- Demonstrates real environmental results through on-the-ground habitat restoration and protection.
- Reflects local environmental and economic priorities.
- Involves the community as equal partners and engages the public throughout the decision-making process
- Demonstrates the ability to secure and leverage funds from multiple sources
- Ensures decisions are based on the best science available
- Builds on water quality control measures and tailors them to specific places and communities
- Is non-regulatory and cost-effective

Collectively, NEPs have restored and protected more than 1.5 million acres of land since 2000 alone.

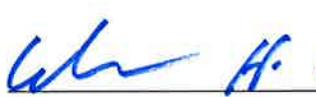
As the health of our coastal ecosystems decline, NEPs work to ensure that federal agencies work together and with state, regional, NGO and private partners to better manage ocean and coastal resources for the benefit of the nation and to reduce conflicts, redundancies, and inefficiencies that waste time and money. The people who live and work near and on our estuaries have the greatest stake in sound coastal management, best understand the unique challenges and opportunities in those places, and know the right stakeholders to engage in crafting durable and effective solutions. NEPs play a key role in implementing national policies that result in better, more cost-effective coastal management that benefits states and local communities.

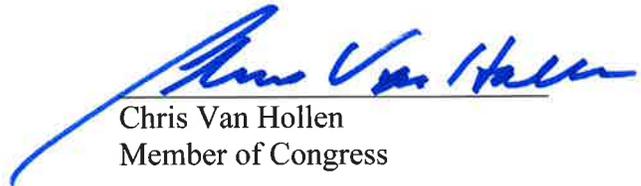
We believe the NEPs in the field should continue to receive \$600,000 each in order to continue ongoing work to help ensure the ecological and economic viability of our nation's estuaries. Thank you for your strong support of this program over the years, and for considering our request.

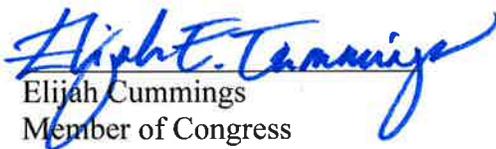
Sincerely,

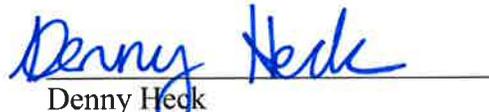

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Member of Congress


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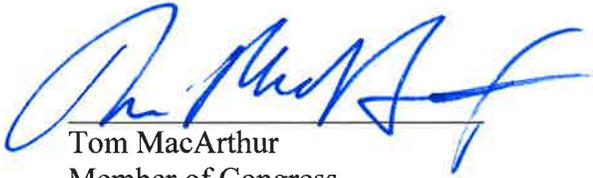

Chris Smith
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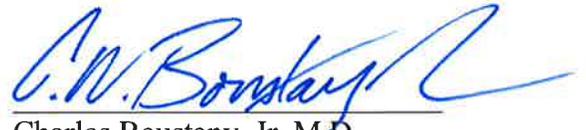
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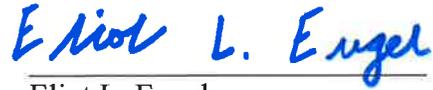
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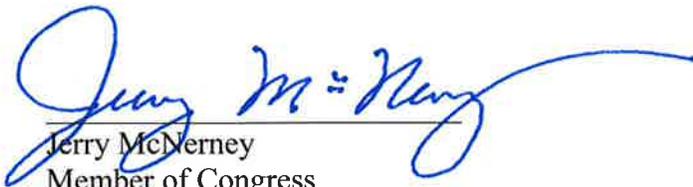
Albio Sires
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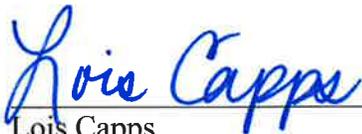
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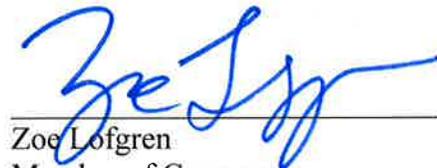
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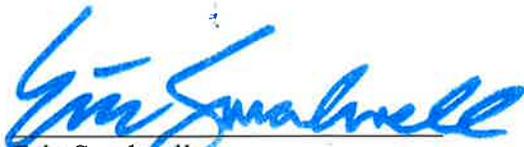
Pedro Pierluisi
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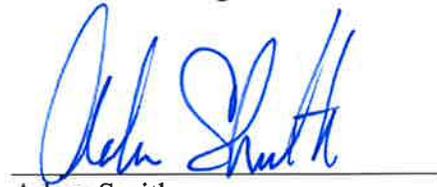
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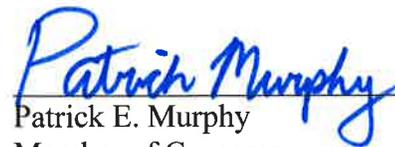
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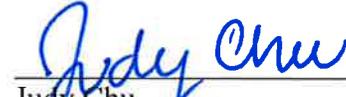
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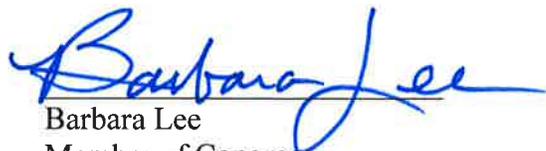
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