

United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-2004

May 27, 2011

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chair
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy and Water
Development
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
184 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chair Feinstein and Ranking Member Alexander:

I respectfully request that you include funding in the Fiscal Year 2012 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill for several programs of special importance to Maryland and the nation.

Energy

The Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program was authorized in the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. This program has a short but highly successful history. The Maryland Energy Administration, for example, uses these funds as a key element in its state-wide effort to meet aggressive energy efficiency goals. The program has helped generate 85,000 person-hours of work just in direct installations in Maryland. Perhaps more importantly, it helped fund 1,450 projects for Maryland residents last year that are expected to save Maryland consumers \$1.2 million and reduce the state's energy consumption by 8,000 MWh. EECBG funding results in measurable benefits by creating green jobs, lowering utility bills, and improving air quality.

I also urge you to include strong funding for the programs under the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE). Investments in renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies are crucial to bolstering America's national security and economic competitiveness in the 21st century global economy.

EERE's programs support critical research, development, and deployment of clean energy technologies across sectors of our nation's economy. The office's renewable energy programs support the harnessing of American homegrown renewable resources like solar, wind, biomass, and geothermal. EERE's energy efficiency programs help reduce energy consumption in our residential, commercial and industrial sectors and promote the development of advanced vehicle technologies. Additionally, EERE provides funds directly to states to fund state and local renewable energy and energy efficiency priorities.

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Water

The Port of Baltimore is an enormous economic engine for Maryland with national significance. There are 126 miles of shipping channels leading to the Port of Baltimore. In 2008, approximately 47.5 million tons of cargo, including 33.0 million tons of foreign cargo valued at \$45.3 billion, and approximately 14.5 million tons of domestic waterborne cargo, moved through the Port of Baltimore. The Maryland Port Administrations estimates that The Port generates 50,700 jobs in Maryland with \$3.7 billion in wages and salaries. Additionally, there are approximately 68,300 related and indirect jobs associated with Port activities.

The health of this Port is tied directly to adequate funding in the Corps' Operation and Maintenance account. Keeping the shipping channels open, removal of hazardous drift materials, and other basic dredging and navigation operations are vital. Similarly, the Poplar Island project (the Paul S. Sarbanes Ecosystem Restoration Project) is the nation's finest example of a beneficial reuse effort. The island accepts the dredge spoils from the Baltimore Channels and also serves as an ecological gem. The Corps typically uses its Construction General budget to fund the operation of Poplar Island, and I request that the subcommittee fund the FY2012 CG budget at the level requested by the President.

Additionally, the Continuing Authorities Program (CAP) supports scores of vital local projects, including small navigation, ecosystem restoration and flood plain protection.

Title IV

Finally, I am requesting strong support for the three Mid-Atlantic River Basin Commissions (RBCs) - Susquehanna River Basin Commission (SRBC), Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC), and the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin (ICPRB). I recommend this programmatic funding be included in Title IV of the Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill, and administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Each of the respective compacts creating the three commissions has been authorized and consented to by acts of Congress (DRBC: P.L. 87-328; ICPRB: P.L. 91-407; SRBC: P.L. 91-575). The federal government has membership on each commission and provision is made in all three compacts for federal appropriations to help support their annual operational expense budgets. This was reinforced four years ago when Congress stipulated in Section 5019 of the Water Resources Development Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-114) that the Secretary of the Army shall allocate the equitable federal share of funding to all three RBCs.

The commissions provide a significant amount of service and function that would otherwise be borne by the USACE and other federal agencies in the furtherance of federal interests. The commissions play a critical role in the allocation of interstate waters among and between the member states and federal entities. Indeed, the Mid-Atlantic RBCs have a demonstrated track record of instituting science-based programs that provide systematic, rather than crisis-based, management – a cheaper and more effective use of taxpayer dollars.

In addition, the three RBCs play strong roles in federal priority initiatives in the Chesapeake Bay and Delaware River Basin. Protection and restoration of these critically important regional water resources continue to be the focus of significant federal attention and are advanced by the work undertaken by the commissions. Federal funding for the RBCs, which is leveraged by financial support from their other commission members, will aid in their ability to meet current demands for studies, monitoring, and assessments to protect the water resources in these nationally significant watersheds. For all the aforementioned reasons, the three RBCs have garnered strong bipartisan support over the years. I request that the subcommittee include the federal government's equitable share of funding for the three Mid-Atlantic RBCs.

If you have any questions or concerns about any of these programmatic funding requests, please have your staff contact Mike Burke (mike_burke@cardin.senate.gov or 224-4524). In the meantime, please know that I appreciate the difficult choices you face and appreciate your careful consideration of these important issues.

Sincerely,


Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator