

TO: U.S. Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies; Chairman Jack Reed, Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski

U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies; Chairman Michael Simpson and Ranking Member James Moran

FROM: Organizations signed below

RE: Urging Support of EPA Funding for the Mid-Atlantic Highlands Action Program

The Mid-Atlantic Highlands Action Program (HAP) is a state, local and federal effort to help protect and restore the forest ecosystem, economic vitality, and heritage of the Appalachian Region. The pilot program was created in 2005 through a Congressional action to help four states of EPA's mid-Atlantic Region (Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and West Virginia) to create ecological restoration jobs in depressed parts of the region, repair environmental scars on the landscape, protect headwater areas for drinking water, and provide an economic boost to depressed Appalachian communities.

To date, a minimal amount of federal funding provided to the four states has leveraged millions of dollars in local support, resulting in an impressive list of on-the-ground projects that are restoring and protecting Appalachian forests, watersheds and communities. A list of completed projects is attached, along with maps and background information on the program.

Funding has run out, however, and this successful program will grind to a halt if additional funding is not appropriated. As this program was initiated by Congressional action, continued action is needed to solidify HAP funding and enable more restoration and protection efforts to occur.

We, the undersigned, urge the Committees to support the inclusion of specific wording in EPA's appropriation for "Geographic Program: Other" (similar to the funding directed for the Gulf of Mexico, Lake Champlain, or Puget Sound programs in EPA's budget item):

Recommended funding level is \$4,000,000 to the Mid-Atlantic Highlands Action Program to continue restoration and protection projects in the Appalachian regions of MD, PA, VA and WV. *(Note that \$2.5 million of the total is for direct costs for restoration and protection projects.)*

Sincerely,

[See attached sheet]

Signatories Urging Support of EPA Funding for the Mid-Atlantic Highlands Action Program

NATIONAL

Trout Unlimited; Bryan K. Moore, V.P. for Volunteer Operations/Watershed Programs

American Rivers; Jim Bradley, Senior Director of Government Relations

National Audubon Society; Mike Daulton, Vice-President Government Relations

PENNSYLVANIA

Audubon Pennsylvania; Phil Wallis, Executive Director and Vice President

Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds; R. John Dawes, Executive Director

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy; Thomas Saunders, President, and CEO

Hawk Mountain Sanctuary; Dr. Keith Bildstein, Director of Conservation Science

Land Conservancy of Adams County; Patrick Naugle, President

VIRGINIA

Virginia Council Trout Unlimited; Graham Simmerman, Chairman

City of Harrisonburg, Department of Parks and Recreation; Lee Foerster, Director

Friends of the Middle River (Augusta County); David Fuller, Chairman

Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah River; Leslie D. Mitchell-Watson, Executive Director

Rockbridge Area Conservation Council; Barbara L. Walsh, Executive Director

WEST VIRGINIA

Canaan Valley Institute; Jennifer Newland, Executive Director

Coal River Group; Bill Currey, Chairman

Friends of Blackwater; Judith Rodd, Executive Director

WV Water Research Institute, West Virginia University; Paul Ziemkiewicz PhD, Director

MARYLAND

Audubon Maryland-DC; Jacqui Bonomo, Executive Director and Vice President