

DELAWARE RIVER BASIN CONSERVATION ACT

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"The Delaware River Basin is a national treasure of great cultural, environmental, and ecological importance."

Delaware River Basin Conservation Act



Photo credit: Nicholas A. Tonelli

WHAT IS THE DRBCA?

The Delaware River Basin Conservation Act (DRBCA) is proposed federal legislation that would create a Delaware River Basin Restoration Program in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to:

1. Develop a coordinated approach to identify, prioritize, and implement restoration and protection activities across the Basin.
2. Provide a competitive grant and technical assistance program to support on-the-ground work by state and local governments, non-profit organizations, and universities.

Highlights:

1. Non-regulatory approach with a voluntary competitive grant program; House and Senate bills identical.
2. Intended to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of public and private efforts, and complement existing funding programs operating in the Basin.
3. Requires consultation with federal and state agencies, regional partnerships, local governments, and other organizations to develop a Basin-wide protection and restoration strategy that is science-based, cost-effective, and facilitates measurable outcomes.
4. Authorizes \$5 million per year; at least 75% of any allocated funds must be used for the grant and technical assistance programs, and the maximum federal share is 50% per project.

The DRBCA would clearly affirm the Delaware River Watershed is a national priority, worthy of the attention and resources currently given to other major watersheds across the country.

WHAT TYPES OF WORK WOULD BENEFIT?

1. Water quality improvements
2. Habitat restoration and protection
3. Flood mitigation
4. Strategic planning to enhance resiliency
5. Public access and recreation
6. Public outreach and education
7. Planning, monitoring, and research



Reintroduced in 112th Congress
(House & Senate)

Reintroduced in 113th
Congress (House)

Reintroduced in 114th
Congress (House & Senate)

2010

2011

2012

2013

2014

2015

First introduced in U.S. House
during 111th Congress

Bill has hearing
in Senate

Reintroduced in 113th
Congress (Senate)

WHY IS THE DRBCA NEEDED?



A NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT RESOURCE

For years, other major watersheds in the United States have benefitted from dedicated funding sources that have provided hundreds of millions of dollars annually for regional protection and restoration efforts. The Delaware River Watershed is among the nation's most important systems in terms of the vital resources it provides to people, fish, and wildlife, yet it receives a fraction of the funding and attention given to other regions. It's time to address this imbalance to ensure that the resources we rely on today are here for the generations that follow.



Photo credit: Charles Tilford



Photo credit: Gregory Breese/USFWS

The Basin is an historical icon and today is home to nationally significant assets including one of the country's most visited National Park units, the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area; more than 400 miles of National Wild and Scenic Rivers; six National Wildlife Refuges; and one of the largest systems represented in the National Estuary Program.

Drinking Water for the Region



More than 8 million residents in the Basin rely on it for drinking water



Another 8 million people outside the Basin also use it for drinking water

It's the only watershed that supplies drinking water to two of the five largest cities in the United States, New York City and Philadelphia.

Ecologically Significant

- The Delaware River is the longest undammed river east of the Mississippi
- Internationally recognized for its important shorebird migration sites
- Provides habitat for over 200 resident and migrant fish species, includes significant recreational fisheries, and is an important source of eastern oyster, blue crab, and the largest population of American horseshoe crabs

Economically Important

- Contributes approximately \$25 billion annually in economic activity and \$21 billion in ecosystem goods and services
- Supports an internationally renowned cold water fishery that generates over \$21 million in annual revenue through tourism and recreational activities
- Supports important commercial fisheries in the Delaware Estuary valued at over \$35 million annually