

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15th, 2013

The Honorable Bill Shuster
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shuster and Chairman Boxer:

As Members whose districts span across six states and include at least one of the three Mid-Atlantic river basin commissions (RBCs), we would like to congratulate you on the passage of two bipartisan water resources bills (WRDA S.601 & WRRDA H.R. 3080). As these bills move to conference, we write to urge you to include the Senate-passed river basin commission language in the final version. We believe that the Senate language will provide greater certainty to the RBCs by requiring the federal government to meet its mandated funding contribution found in the three interstate river compacts.

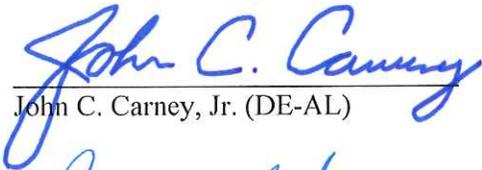
The federally-authorized mid-Atlantic river basin commissions include the Delaware River Basin Commission, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, and the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. These commissions provide critical water quality, flood mitigation, infrastructure maintenance and operation, and water supply management within their basins. In the absence of the RBCs, a significant amount of their services and functions would otherwise be borne by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and other federal agencies.

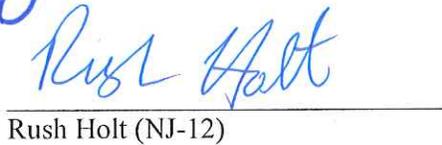
Despite the important role that the RBCs play for people and ecosystems along the mid-Atlantic, the federal government has failed to meet its legal funding obligations regarding their management and operations over the last two decades. In fact, over the last 17 years the federal government has met its full obligation to the RBCs only once. More recently, states that are facing tight budgets have cited the lack of federal funding as a reason for reducing their own payments. Approximately 80 percent of RBC resources are dedicated to personnel expenses and if federal funding is not restored, the Delaware River Basin Commission alone has indicated that it will be forced to lay off 25 percent of all staff, including geologists, hydrologists, engineers, resource managers, and administrative staff. The Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin and Susquehanna River Basin Commission will be faced with similar situations if federal funding shortfalls continue.

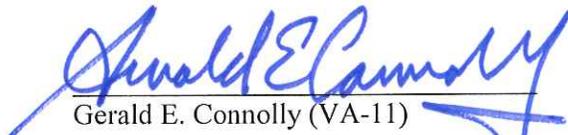
The Senate-passed Water Resources Development Act (S. 601) includes a provision that directs the Secretary of the Army to allocate funds at not more than 1.5 percent of the Army Corps General Expenses account "to fulfill the equitable funding requirements of the respective interstate compacts on an annual basis and in amounts equal to the amount determined by the Commission in accordance with the respective interstate compact." This language is critical for our RBCs to fulfill their mission and we strongly encourage you to include it in the final conference report.

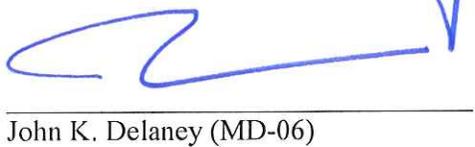
Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

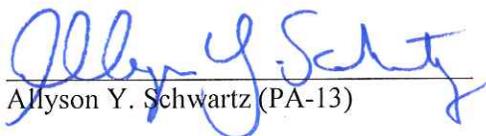
Sincerely,

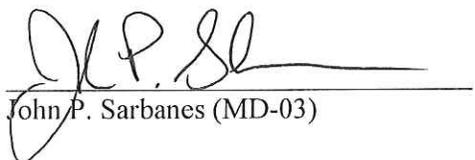

John C. Carney, Jr. (DE-AL)

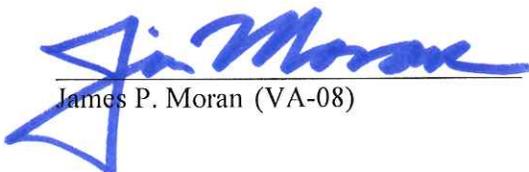

Rush Holt (NJ-12)

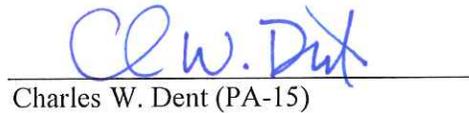

Gerald E. Connolly (VA-11)


John K. Delaney (MD-06)

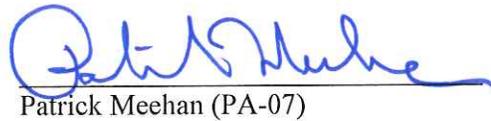

Allyson Y. Schwartz (PA-13)

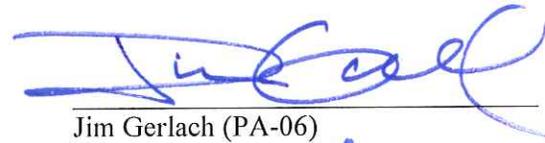

John P. Sarbanes (MD-03)


James P. Moran (VA-08)


Charles W. Dent (PA-15)


Chris Gibson (NY-19)

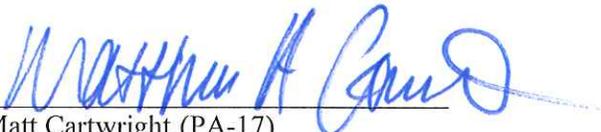

Patrick Meehan (PA-07)


Jim Gerlach (PA-06)

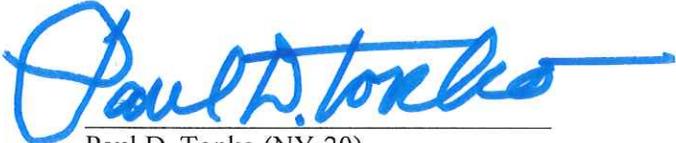

Michael G. Fitzpatrick (PA-08)


Eleanor Holmes Norton (DC-AL)


Chris Van Hollen (MD-08)


Matt Cartwright (PA-17)


Chaka Fattah (PA-02)


Paul D. Tonko (NY-20)


Robert A. Brady (PA-01)