

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2016

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ken Calvert
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairmen Rogers and Calvert and Ranking Members Lowey and McCollum:

As we conclude our celebration of National Estuary Week, we would like to thank you for your efforts to support and protect our national estuaries in the House FY2017 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. In addition, we would like to call your attention to the important reforms made to the National Estuary Program (NEP) in the reauthorization (S.1523) that was signed into law in May. As the FY2017 appropriations process moves forward, we would greatly appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your staff to ensure that the final spending legislation accurately reflects the recent reauthorization.

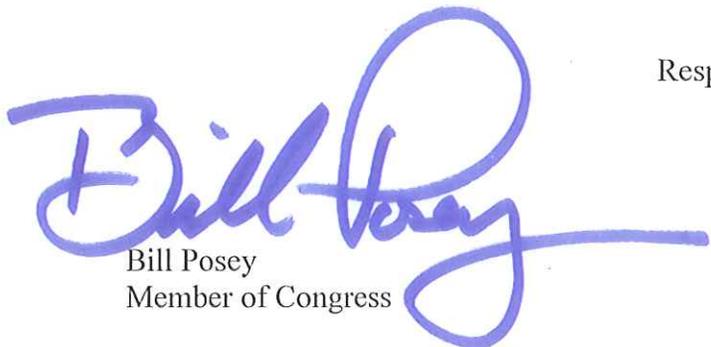
S. 1523 made important reforms to the NEP's administration and resource allocation requirements, and instituted a competitive grant program that will further assist estuaries with urgent needs. The much-needed fiscal reforms included in the NEP reauthorization will maximize the funds received by our national estuaries, and help streamline the administrative costs of the program. The appropriations process offers a valuable opportunity to reaffirm these bright line resource allocation requirements and avoid any unnecessary delay in realizing their benefits to our estuaries.

It is also important to recognize that many of our estuaries of national significance are in immediate need of the additional funding made available by the new competitive grant program. The purpose of these grants is to help estuaries address the urgent issues that threaten the ecological and economic well being of coastal areas. The grant funds will help communities overcome challenges like extensive seagrass habitat loss, harmful algae blooms, and invasive species, all problems that become exponentially more difficult to solve the longer they go unaddressed. As such, timely implementation of this program is essential to its effectiveness, and any steps to underscore this critical reality through the appropriations process would be greatly appreciated by our coastal communities.

In the House appropriations bill, your committee demonstrated laudable commitment to protecting our nation's treasured estuaries. Now, we must work to ensure that the funds dedicated to the program are disbursed consistent with the goal of maximizing the benefit to

these coastal waterways. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure that the final spending legislation is consistent with the recent reauthorization levels and Congress' desire to see the competitive grant program quickly and responsibly implemented.

Respectfully,



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



Bill Keating
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



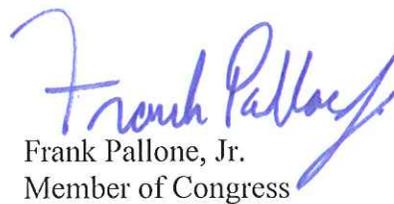
Curt Clawson
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



James R. Langevin
Member of Congress



Patrick E. Murphy
Member of Congress



Daniel M. Donovan, Jr.
Member of Congress



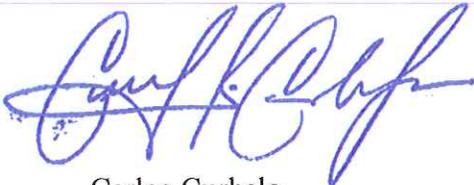
Frank C. Guinta
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



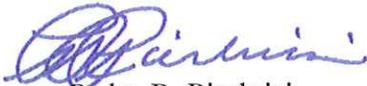
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



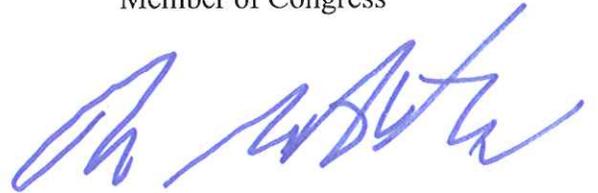
Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



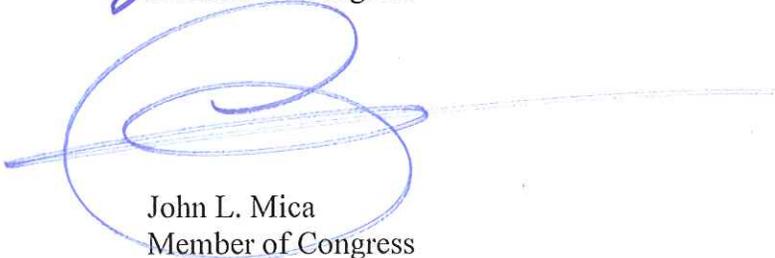
Tom MacArthur
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



John L. Mica
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
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Lois Capps
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Earl Blumenauer
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Ron DeSantis
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