

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman spoke today at a Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans Subcommittee hearing regarding Chesapeake Bay oyster restoration efforts. In the hearing, Wittman highlighted how his legislation, the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act, H.R. 6771, would increase accountability, improve management and produce better results.

"It is clear to me that we are failing to meet the goals outlined in the Chesapeake Bay 2000 agreement to achieve a minimum ten fold increase in native oyster populations in the Bay," said Wittman.

"The federal and state financial investment in restoration efforts has been substantial with uninspiring results. Despite the millions of dollars spent directly on oyster restoration we have seen only isolated success and a continued decline in the oyster population," said Wittman.

"We must take a hard look at past restoration efforts and reassess and reevaluate goals and methods to make sure we are effectively managing this resource with an aim of ecological and economic restoration," said Wittman.

"The Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act of 2008 would implement a crosscut budgeting and active adaptive management requirement for Chesapeake Bay restoration activities. I believe these principals would be helpful in guiding future oyster restoration efforts," said Wittman.

Wittman recently announced a growing coalition in support of his Chesapeake Bay bill and is continuing a push for its consideration by Congress. Wittman's legislation would help better account for and coordinate the millions of dollars spent each year on Bay restoration. Currently, no comprehensive method for tracking project progress or dollars spent exists.

At the hearing, Wittman was pleased to host Tommy Kellum, Vice President of the Virginia Seafood Council and Bill Goldsborough, Director of Fisheries at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, as witnesses.