

House Natural Resources Subcommittee Reviews Legislation Today

Washington, DC – Congressman Rob Wittman (VA-1) lauded the introduction of his legislation, the *Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act of 2011*, [H.R. 258](#), in the Senate by Senators Mark Warner and Jim Webb.

After its passage in the U.S. House of Representatives during the last session of Congress, Wittman reintroduced H.R. 258 to continue his efforts to fundamentally alter the management of Chesapeake Bay restoration activities.

Today, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Fisheries, Wildlife, Oceans, and Insular Affairs held a hearing on the legislation, beginning its movement through the House.

“Today was a great day for the clean-up efforts of the Chesapeake Bay,” Wittman said. “I am excited to work with Senators Warner and Webb to get this bill through the Congress. After our success in the House during the last session of Congress, I hope for quick consideration after today’s committee hearing in the House. Virginia, and especially America’s First District, is historically, economically and culturally tied to the waters of the Chesapeake Bay; its restoration is one of my highest priorities. Currently, multiple agencies and groups share concerns about the Bay, but are not adequately working together. This bill will bring agencies together to adequately and equally address concerns about the Bay.”

Wittman's legislation would fully implement two cutting edge management techniques, crosscut budgeting and adaptive management, to enhance coordination, flexibility and efficiency of restoration efforts. These techniques have been used successfully in the Everglades and the Great Lakes; however, they have not been fully implemented in Bay restoration efforts, where results have lagged far behind the billions of dollars spent. Additionally, the legislation would create a Chesapeake Bay Program Independent Evaluator to review and report to Congress on restoration activities in the watershed. The Chesapeake Bay partnership includes 10 federal agencies, six states and the District of Columbia, over one thousand localities and multiple non-governmental organizations. To date, the complexity of the participants has resulted in a muddled effort. In drafting this legislation, Congressman Wittman drew heavily on his 23 years of experience as a shellfish specialist monitoring water quality and environmental health issues in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The *Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act of 2009* passed the House in the fall of 2009, but did not reach passage in the Senate.

Visit the [Committee Hearings](#) webpage for testimony and additional information, once it is made available.