

August 1, 2008: Congressman Wittman Proposes Chesapeake Bay Bill to Modernize Management of Bay Cleanup

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman, an environmental scientist by trade, has introduced the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act, H.R. 6771, in an effort to fundamentally alter the management of the Chesapeake Bay restoration activities.

"We've studied the Bay for decades and have no shortage of motivation to restore it, but we certainly don't have enough to show for our efforts. We need to execute more intelligently and efficiently, and I think that's where we've dropped the ball," said Wittman.

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. Neither technique is currently required or fully utilized in the Bay restoration efforts, where results have lagged far behind the billions of dollars spent.

"Imagine if you had a full symphony with a committee of conductors and each musician playing a different piece of music. That's essentially what we have in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort today," said Wittman.

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 16 years of experience as a shellfish specialist monitoring water quality and environmental health issues in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

"Both methods required by this bill have been used successfully in complex restoration efforts in the Everglades, the Great Lakes and the California Bay Delta. By taking a couple pages out of their playbook, I think we will achieve substantial improvements in Chesapeake Bay Restoration" said Wittman.