

February 17, 2009: Congressman Wittman Proposes Chesapeake Bay Bill

(WASHINGTON, DC) - Congressman Rob Wittman, an environmental scientist by trade, has reintroduced the Chesapeake Bay Accountability and Recovery Act, H.R. 1053, in an effort to fundamentally alter the management of Chesapeake Bay restoration activities. Yesterday, Wittman held a press conference at the Virginia General Assembly building along with Assembly members and Chesapeake Bay stakeholders to announce the bill's reintroduction.

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.

"Right now we have several agencies and groups that are concerned about the Bay, but we're not adequately working together. The right and left hands aren't telling each other what they're doing, and that's what this bill will accomplish," 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.

"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.

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.