

**Mr. SCOTT of Virginia:** Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5540, the Chesapeake Bay Gateways and Watertrails Network Continuing Reauthorization Act. I commend my colleague from Maryland (Mr. *Sarbanes*) for introducing the bill, which will help further the Chesapeake Bay's restoration.

I serve as cochair of the bipartisan Chesapeake Bay Task Force, and I'm proud to be an original cosponsor of this legislation.

Over 400 years ago, the first permanent English settlers of North America sailed into the Chesapeake Bay and settled on the banks of the James River at Jamestown, Virginia. Although the Chesapeake Bay played a significant role in the founding of this great Nation, the bay is often one of the most overlooked natural and economic estuaries in the United States.

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed touches 41 congressional districts in the States of Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, Pennsylvania, New York and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I have been actively involved in ensuring that the resources are available to protect and restore the Chesapeake Bay since my days in the Virginia General Assembly. When I served in the Virginia House of Delegates, I was a member of a joint Virginia/Maryland legislative task force that first recommended in 1980 a multi-State commission to address bay issues. And that multi-State commission continues to recognize the Chesapeake Bay as a vitally important regional and national treasure.

H.R. 5540 will reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Gateways Network, which is the National Park Service component of the greater Chesapeake Bay Program. The goal of this network is to conserve the natural beauty and cultural heritage of the bay for the benefit and enjoyment of future generations through grants, technical assistance to parks, volunteer groups, wildlife refuges, historical sites, museums and water trails throughout the bay watershed. The network ties all of these sites and projects together to actively engage citizens to help clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Since 2000, the network has grown to include 156 gateways in six States and the District of Columbia.

Mr. Speaker, I commend the gentleman from Maryland for his leadership. And I want to take the opportunity to thank our new Virginia colleague, Mr. *Wittman*, for his long-time leadership and activity in Chesapeake Bay issues. I commend the Committee on Natural Resources for reporting the bill favorably to the full House and urge my colleagues to support the bill.