



# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

*Office of the Governor*

Mark R. Warner  
Governor

February 16, 2004

Admiral James D. Watkins, USN  
Chairman-U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy  
1120 20<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W., Suite 200 North  
Washington, D.C. 20036

Dear Admiral Watkins:

The Commonwealth of Virginia is well known for its estuarine and coastal resources including the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic coast of the Eastern Shore and Virginia Beach. With the important role that coastal resources play in the Commonwealth's economy, environment, and quality of life, I am looking forward to reviewing the U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy's draft report when it is released later this year. I am hopeful that the report will propose significant actions that can be taken by the Federal government, in concert with the states, to address the serious challenges to our coastal resources.

Virginia has more than 3,300 miles of coastline. The contribution to the Commonwealth's economy from its coastal resources is significant through tourism, recreation, commercial and sport fisheries, wildlife enjoyment, and other activities. However, pollution, habitat loss and other factors have taken their toll. A strong federal and state partnership is desperately needed to more effectively tackle the critical issues facing Virginia's, and the nation's, coastal, bay and ocean resources.

I believe that our efforts to restore Chesapeake Bay could serve as a model for other estuaries nation-wide. Last December, Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. and I, along with our other partners in the Chesapeake Bay Program, launched a new initiative in December. We are leading an effort to make the Chesapeake Bay a national priority, and to seek new Federal support for our efforts to improve water quality. The federal government is the financial patron of the world's largest ecosystem restoration effort in the Florida Everglades. Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts also need significant federal financial assistance. For example, the cost of achieving nutrient reduction goals is estimated at \$11.5 billion over the next ten years, and the total cost of Bay watershed restoration is estimated at \$19 billion.

My administration is taking immediate steps to address the pollutants that are destroying Bay habitat and impairing water quality. I have proposed to the General Assembly additional financial support for our efforts to reduce nutrient and sediment pollution in the Chesapeake Bay and to conserve important lands. We have also initiated regulatory actions to establish nutrient

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limits in waste water discharge permits and to revise our estuarine water quality standards to protect living resources.

Federal support for these kinds of actions is critical. The U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy has an opportunity, through your upcoming report, to recommend effective actions that the Federal government could take to provide leadership and financial support for states to control runoff and point pollution, restore habitat, and acquire sensitive areas. The Commission's report will be closely reviewed by the President and Congress and I believe that you have an important opportunity to recommend bold steps that could result in the improvement and protection of the nation's bays, coasts, and oceans.

Please accept my thanks for the attention you are bringing to these issues. My administration is anxious to assist the Commission in its efforts to better protect and restore the nation's coastal and ocean resources.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark R. Warner".

Mark R. Warner

MRW:zh