



HRPDC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

March 31, 2011

ITEM #2: PUBLIC COMMENTS

SENATE OF VIRGINIA



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION AND
NATURAL RESOURCES
EDUCATION AND HEALTH
PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS
REHABILITATION AND SOCIAL SERVICES

RALPH S. NORTHAM
6th SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ALL OF ACCOMACK, MATHEWS, AND
NORTHAMPTON COUNTIES, AND PART OF
THE CITIES OF NORFOLK AND VIRGINIA BEACH
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March 30, 2011

Stan D. Clark, Chair
Hampton Roads PDC
The Regional Building
723 Woodlake Drive
Chesapeake, VA 23320

Dear Stan,

As you are aware, Virginia authored and EPA approved the Commonwealth's watershed implementation plan, designed to improve water quality in the Chesapeake Bay. The state worked with stakeholders to make certain that the load allocations for localities were equitable and attainable, and combined that input with the best available science to create a reasonable and long overdue roadmap to a clean Bay.

The General Assembly took several steps to help ensure we follow this roadmap in the most cost-effective manner possible. I co-sponsored legislation to ban phosphorus from lawn maintenance fertilizer, which by conservative estimates will reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the Bay by 230,000 pounds - over 20% of Virginia's allocation. Homebuilders, realtors, agribusiness, retailers, and conservation groups worked diligently to pass this bipartisan bill, which serves as an example of what we can accomplish when local and state government work collaboratively with the private sector to achieve a common goal.

It is difficult to measure the intrinsic value of the Bay. However, it is clear that the quality of life the Bay affords Hampton Roads residents draws people and employers to the region. The Bay was once the most productive estuary in the world. Economically, it has not only sustained the livelihoods of generations of watermen and seafood processors, but has spawned countless small businesses that drive our economy.

Cleaning up the Bay will require all who live in the watershed to shoulder a portion of the burden. Hampton Roads communities have the most to gain from a clean Bay. I hope the HRPDC chooses to lead the effort to restore this national treasure. Not doing so now would be a failure of our elected officials to do the will of the people and would negatively impact our region for decades to come.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "R. Northam".

Ralph S. Northam
Senator, Virginia's 6th District

cc: Dwight L. Farmer, Executive Director
John Carlock, Deputy Executive Director
Hampton Roads Planning District Commission Executive Committee Members