

Union Calendar No. 664

119TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 6893

[Report No. 119-763]

To reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Office of the National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DECEMBER 18, 2025

Mr. SCOTT of Virginia (for himself, Mr. WITTMAN, Mrs. KIGGANS of Virginia,
and Ms. ELFRETH) introduced the following bill; which was referred to
the Committee on Natural Resources

AUGUST 20, 2026

Additional sponsors: Ms. NORTON, Mr. IVEY, Ms. MCCLELLAN, and Mrs.
McCLAIN DELANEY

AUGUST 20, 2026

Reported with an amendment, committed to the Committee of the Whole
House on the State of the Union, and ordered to be printed

[Strike out all after the enacting clause and insert the part printed in italic]

[For text of introduced bill, see copy of bill as introduced on December 18, 2025]

A BILL

To reauthorize the Chesapeake Bay Office of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
 2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 *This Act may be cited as the “Chesapeake Bay Water-*
 5 *shed Advancement for Training, Education, Restoration,*
 6 *and Science (WATERS) Act”.*

7 **SEC. 2. REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIONAL OCEANIC AND AT-**
 8 **MOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION CHESAPEAKE**
 9 **BAY OFFICE.**

10 *Section 307 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric*
 11 *Administration Authorization Act of 1992 (15 U.S.C.*
 12 *1511d) is amended—*

13 *(1) in subsection (a)—*

14 *(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “(in this*
 15 *section” and all that follows and inserting a pe-*
 16 *riod;*

17 *(B) in paragraph (2), to read as follows:*

18 *“(2) The Office shall be headed by a Director, who—*

19 *“(A) shall have knowledge and experience in re-*
 20 *search or resource management efforts in the Ches-*
 21 *apeake Bay; and*

22 *“(B) shall be responsible for the administration*
 23 *and operation of the Office and the implementation*
 24 *of this section.”; and*

25 *(C) by striking paragraph (3);*

1 (2) in subsection (b)—

2 (A) in paragraph (2), by striking “Sec-
3 retary of Commerce” and inserting “Adminis-
4 trator”;

5 (B) in paragraph (3)—

6 (i) by inserting “with and represent”
7 after “coordinate”;

8 (ii) by striking “, the Chesapeake Bay
9 Regional Sea Grant Programs, and the
10 Chesapeake Bay units of the National Estu-
11 arine Research Reserve System,” and in-
12 serting “for the Chesapeake Bay Program
13 and that relate to the Chesapeake Bay wa-
14 tershed in furtherance of such Administra-
15 tion’s coastal resource stewardship mis-
16 sion,”;

17 (iii) in subparagraph (A)—

18 (I) in clauses (vi) and (vii), by
19 striking “and” at the end; and

20 (II) by adding at the end the fol-
21 lowing:

22 “(viii) coastal hazards; and

23 “(ix) education; and”; and

24 (iv) in subparagraph (B)—

1 (I) in clause (iii), by striking
2 “and” at the end;

3 (II) in clause (iv), by inserting
4 “and” after the semicolon; and

5 (III) by adding at the end the fol-
6 lowing:

7 “(v) integrated ecosystem assess-
8 ments;”;

9 (C) in paragraph (4)—

10 (i) by striking “Environmental Protec-
11 tion Agency” and inserting “Chesapeake
12 Executive Council”; and

13 (ii) by inserting before the semicolon at
14 the end the following: “as appropriate to
15 further the purposes of this section”;

16 (D) by striking paragraphs (5) and (7);

17 (E) by redesignating paragraph (6) as
18 paragraph (5); and

19 (F) by adding at the end the following:

20 “(6) perform any functions necessary to support
21 the programs referred to in paragraph (3).”;

22 (3) by striking subsections (c), (d), and (e); and

23 (4) by adding at the end the following:

24 “(c) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—

1 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Administrator, acting*
2 *through the Director, shall implement the program*
3 *activities authorized by this section to support the ac-*
4 *tivity of the Chesapeake Executive Council and to fur-*
5 *ther the purposes of this section.*

6 “(2) *ENSURING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL*
7 *MERIT.*—*The Director shall—*

8 “(A) *establish and use an effective and*
9 *transparent mechanism to ensure that projects*
10 *funded under this section have undergone appro-*
11 *priate peer review; and*

12 “(B) *provide other appropriate means to*
13 *determine that such projects have acceptable sci-*
14 *entific and technical merit for the purpose of*
15 *achieving maximum use of available funds and*
16 *resources to benefit the Chesapeake Bay area.*

17 “(3) *CONSULTATION WITH CHESAPEAKE EXECU-*
18 *TIVE COUNCIL.*—*The Director shall, in the implemen-*
19 *tation of the program activities authorized under this*
20 *section, consult with the Chesapeake Executive Coun-*
21 *cil, to ensure that the activities of the Office are con-*
22 *sistent with the purposes and priorities of the Ches-*
23 *apeake Bay Agreement and plans developed pursuant*
24 *to the such agreement.*

25 “(4) *INTEGRATED COASTAL OBSERVATIONS.*—

1 “(A) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Administrator, act-*
2 *ing through the Director, may collaborate with*
3 *scientific and academic institutions, State and*
4 *Federal agencies, nongovernmental organiza-*
5 *tions, and other constituents in the Chesapeake*
6 *Bay watershed to support an integrated observa-*
7 *tions system for the Chesapeake Bay consistent*
8 *with the purposes of the Integrated Coastal and*
9 *Ocean Observation System Act of 2009 (33*
10 *U.S.C. 3601 et seq.).*

11 “(B) *SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS.*—*To sup-*
12 *port the system referred to in subparagraph (A)*
13 *and provide a complete set of environmental in-*
14 *formation for the Chesapeake Bay, the Director*
15 *shall—*

16 “(i) *coordinate monitoring with Fed-*
17 *eral and State agencies in the tidal portions*
18 *of the Chesapeake Bay to understand im-*
19 *pacts of water quality on living marine re-*
20 *sources;*

21 “(ii) *identify new data collection needs*
22 *and deploy new technologies, as appro-*
23 *priate;*

24 “(iii) *collect and analyze the scientific*
25 *information necessary for the management*

1 *of living marine resources and the marine*
2 *habitat associated with such resources; and*

3 “(iv) *organize the information de-*
4 *scribed in clause (iii) into products that are*
5 *useful to policy makers, resource managers,*
6 *scientists, and the public.*

7 “(C) *CHESAPEAKE BAY INTERPRETIVE BUOY*
8 *SYSTEM.—To further the development and imple-*
9 *mentation of the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive*
10 *Buoy System and associated monitoring assets to*
11 *improve weather and ecological forecasts, mon-*
12 *itor habitat conditions for living marine re-*
13 *sources, the Director may—*

14 “(i) *support the establishment and im-*
15 *plementation of the Captain John Smith*
16 *Chesapeake National Historic Trail;*

17 “(ii) *delineate key waypoints along the*
18 *trail and provide appropriate real-time*
19 *data and information for trail users;*

20 “(iii) *interpret data and information*
21 *for use by educators and students to inspire*
22 *stewardship of the Chesapeake Bay; and*

23 “(iv) *incorporate the observational*
24 *data from the Chesapeake Bay Interpretive*
25 *Buoy System into the Integrated Ocean Ob-*

1 *serving System regional observing system*
2 *network.*

3 “(5) *CHESAPEAKE BAY WATERSHED EDUCATION*
4 *AND TRAINING PROGRAM.*—

5 “(A) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Administrator, act-*
6 *ing through the Director, may establish a Chesa-*
7 *peake Bay watershed education and training*
8 *program. The program shall—*

9 “(i) *continue and expand the Chesa-*
10 *peake Bay watershed education programs*
11 *offered by the Office immediately before the*
12 *enactment of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed*
13 *Advancement for Training, Education, Res-*
14 *toration, and Science (WATERS) Act;*

15 “(ii) *improve the understanding of ele-*
16 *mentary and secondary school students and*
17 *teachers of the living resources of the eco-*
18 *system of the Chesapeake Bay;*

19 “(iii) *provide education and career*
20 *pathway internships; and*

21 “(iv) *meet the educational goals of the*
22 *Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement.*

23 “(B) *GRANT PROGRAM.*—*The Director may*
24 *award grants for the purposes of this paragraph.*
25 *Grants awarded under this subparagraph may*

1 *be used to support education and training*
2 *projects that enhance understanding and assess-*
3 *ment of a specific environmental problem in the*
4 *Chesapeake Bay watershed or a goal of the*
5 *Chesapeake Bay Program, or protect or restore*
6 *living resources of the Chesapeake Bay water-*
7 *shed, including projects that—*

8 “(i) *provide classroom education, in-*
9 *cluding the development and use of distance*
10 *learning and other innovative technologies,*
11 *related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed;*

12 “(ii) *provide meaningful watershed*
13 *educational experiences in the Chesapeake*
14 *Bay watershed;*

15 “(iii) *provide professional development*
16 *for teachers related to the Chesapeake Bay*
17 *watershed and the dissemination of perti-*
18 *nent education materials oriented to vary-*
19 *ing grade levels;*

20 “(iv) *demonstrate or disseminate envi-*
21 *ronmental educational tools and materials*
22 *related to the Chesapeake Bay watershed;*

23 “(v) *demonstrate field methods, prac-*
24 *tices, and techniques including assessment*
25 *of environmental and ecological conditions*

1 *and analysis of environmental problems;*
2 *and*

3 “(vi) *build the capacity of school dis-*
4 *tricts and their partners to deliver high*
5 *quality environmental education programs.*

6 “(C) *COORDINATION.—The Director shall*
7 *implement the education and training program*
8 *in coordination with the heads of other Federal*
9 *agencies, as the Director determines appropriate.*

10 “(6) *COASTAL AND LIVING RESOURCES MANAGE-*
11 *MENT AND HABITAT PROGRAM.—*

12 “(A) *IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, act-*
13 *ing through the Director, may establish a Ches-*
14 *apeake Bay Coastal Living Resources Manage-*
15 *ment and Habitat Program to support coordi-*
16 *nated management, protection, characterization,*
17 *and restoration of priority Chesapeake Bay habi-*
18 *tats and living resources, including oysters, blue*
19 *crabs, salt marshes, submerged aquatic vegeta-*
20 *tion, and economically and ecologically impor-*
21 *tant fish species such as striped bass and menha-*
22 *den.*

23 “(B) *ACTIVITIES.—Under the Chesapeake*
24 *Bay Coastal Living Resources Management and*
25 *Habitat Program, the Director may carry out or*

1 *enter into grants, contracts, and cooperative*
2 *agreements and provide technical assistance to*
3 *support—*

4 *“(i) native oyster research and restora-*
5 *tion;*

6 *“(ii) fish and shellfish aquaculture that*
7 *is carried out in accordance with a valid*
8 *Federal or State permit;*

9 *“(iii) establishment of submerged*
10 *aquatic vegetation restoration programs;*

11 *“(iv) the development of programs that*
12 *restore, protect, and build the resilience of*
13 *critical coastal habitats and communities;*

14 *“(v) habitat mapping, characteriza-*
15 *tion, and assessment techniques necessary to*
16 *identify, assess, and monitor Chesapeake*
17 *Bay conditions and restoration actions;*

18 *“(vi) application and transfer of ap-*
19 *plied scientific research and ecosystem man-*
20 *agement tools to fisheries and habitat man-*
21 *agers;*

22 *“(vii) collection, synthesis, and sharing*
23 *of information to inform and influence*
24 *coastal and living resource management*
25 *issues;*

1 “(viii) *ecologically and economically*
2 *important fish and shellfish research; and*
3 “(ix) *other activities that the director*
4 *determines are appropriate to carry out the*
5 *purposes of such program.*

6 “(d) *DELEGATION.*—

7 “(1) *AUTHORITY.*—*The Administrator shall dele-*
8 *gate to the Director such authority as may be nec-*
9 *essary to carry out this section.*

10 “(2) *STAFF.*—*The Administrator shall assign to*
11 *the Director appropriate staff representing expertise*
12 *that covers the breadth of the duties of the Office.*

13 “(e) *REPORTS.*—

14 “(1) *IN GENERAL.*—*The Administrator, acting*
15 *through the Director, shall submit a biennial report*
16 *to the Committee on Natural Resources of the House*
17 *of Representatives, the Committee on Commerce,*
18 *Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the*
19 *Secretary of Commerce on the activities of the Office*
20 *and on progress made in protecting and restoring the*
21 *living resources and habitat of the Chesapeake Bay.*

22 “(2) *ACTION PLAN.*—*Each such report shall in-*
23 *clude an action plan for the 2-year period following*
24 *submission of the report, consisting of—*

1 “(A) a list of recommended research, moni-
2 toring, and data collection activities necessary to
3 continue implementation of the strategy under
4 subsection (b)(2); and

5 “(B) recommendations to integrate National
6 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration activi-
7 ties with the activities of the partners in the
8 Chesapeake Bay Program to meet the commit-
9 ments of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement and
10 subsequent agreements.

11 “(f) AGREEMENTS.—

12 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator, acting
13 through the Director, may enter into and perform
14 such contracts, leases, grants, or cooperative agree-
15 ments as may be necessary to carry out the purposes
16 of this Act.

17 “(2) USE OF OTHER RESOURCES.—For purposes
18 related to the understanding, protection, and restora-
19 tion of Chesapeake Bay, the Director may use, with
20 consent and with or without reimbursement, the land,
21 services, equipment, personnel, and facilities of any
22 Department, agency, or instrumentality of the United
23 States, or of any State, local government, Indian
24 Tribe, or of any political subdivision thereof.

25 “(g) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 “(1) *ADMINISTRATOR.*—*The term ‘Adminis-*
2 *trator’ means the Administrator of the National Oce-*
3 *anic and Atmospheric Administration.*

4 “(2) *CHESAPEAKE BAY AGREEMENT; CHESA-*
5 *PEAKE BAY ECOSYSTEM; CHESAPEAKE BAY PROGRAM;*
6 *CHESAPEAKE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.*—*The terms*
7 *‘Chesapeake Bay Agreement’, ‘Chesapeake Bay eco-*
8 *system’, ‘Chesapeake Bay Program’, and ‘Chesapeake*
9 *Executive Council’ have the meanings given those*
10 *terms in section 117(a) of the Federal Water Pollu-*
11 *tion Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1267(a)).*

12 “(3) *DIRECTOR.*—*The term ‘Director’ means the*
13 *Director of the Office.*

14 “(4) *OFFICE.*—*The term ‘Office’ means the*
15 *Chesapeake Bay Office established under this sec-*
16 *tion.’.*

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