



CHESAPEAKE BAY COMMISSION

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PRESS RELEASE

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BERNIE FOWLER, ICONIC LEADER IN BAY RESTORATION, HONORED BY LEGISLATORS IN MARYLAND, VIRGINIA AND PENNSYLVANIA



Bernie Fowler celebrating his 28th Annual Patuxent River Wade-In.
Photo Credit: Chesapeake Bay Program

ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND – The Honorable Bernie Fowler, former Senator and current member of the tri-state Chesapeake Bay Commission, was honored today in the Maryland House and Senate for his 50 years of work to restore the Chesapeake Bay, including 32 years as a Commission member. The action coincides with similar recognitions in Virginia and Pennsylvania led by his Commission colleagues. “Senator Fowler is revered in the State House and a valued mentor to all of us working to restore Chesapeake Bay,” said Maryland Senator (28th District) and Commission Chair Thomas “Mac” Middleton. Virginia Delegate (31st District) and Commission Vice Chair Scott Lingamfelter added, “Great men and women inspire and work hard to achieve their dreams. Bernie Fowler is a great man.”

Fowler often recounts memories from his boyhood growing up along the Patuxent River when he could see his feet while standing in chest-high clear water, a condition that no longer exists, to his lament. Fowler’s “white sneaker index” has been popularized at his annual “Wade In” event attended by hundreds over the past 27 years, from schoolchildren to governors and U.S. Congressmen and Senators. This year’s event is scheduled for June 12 at Jefferson Patterson Park. The public is invited.

“Bernie knows the magic of clean water and a productive Chesapeake Bay. His dedication to the Bay’s protection has been contagious and his disciples are everywhere.” said Ann Swanson, Executive Director of the Commission.

Fowler’s signature legislation in the 1980’s required all major wastewater treatment plants to decrease their nitrogen and phosphorus discharges, a strategy the state still heavily relies upon for Bay restoration. He also engaged in legal campaigns to restore the Bay, including his lawsuit in the 1970’s against counties upriver from Calvert County that led them to upgrade their wastewater treatment plants, and a lawsuit, along with the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, that led U.S. EPA to set mandatory pollution limits for the Bay jurisdictions in 2010.

He frequently encourages his colleagues with his oft quoted phrase to “Never, Never, Never Give Up!” “Senator Fowler’s call to action resonates powerfully, even with those of us who seem to be a world away in North-central Pennsylvania,” said Pennsylvania Representative (84th District) and Commission Vice Chair Garth Everett. “It is a personal fight for his beloved Patuxent, and we should all be so fortunate to have the passion and commitment to our local waters that he does.”

The Chesapeake Bay Commission is a policy leader in the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay. As a tri-state legislative body that advises the legislative branch of state government, it’s mission is to identify critical environmental needs, evaluate public concerns, and ensure state and Federal actions to sustain the living resources of the Chesapeake Bay. The Commission works directly with the state general assemblies and the U.S. Congress and serves as the legislative branch of the Chesapeake Bay Program.

For further information, please contact Ann Swanson, Executive Director, 410-263-3420

The Virginia resolution can be found here: <http://lis.virginia.gov/cgi-bin/legp604.exe?161+ful+HJ32+pdf>

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