



CONGRESSMAN  
**JOHN SARBANES**  
 REPRESENTING MARYLAND'S 3RD CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT



## The Sarbanes Standard

## Chesapeake Bay Citizen Stewardship

Dear Friends,

Marylanders have a strong tradition of environmental advocacy rooted in a passion for the Chesapeake Bay. The Chesapeake Bay is our Nation's largest estuary and, in many ways, the soul of our state. It is a national environmental treasure and an economic catalyst as it pertains to Maryland's tourism and seafood industries. Unfortunately, the Bay's health has been negatively impacted by multiple factors, most notably nutrient runoff from our neighborhoods, farms and roadways. I share your passion for the Bay and I am committed to reversing these trends and restoring the Bay's water quality and natural habitats.

### Save the Bay Homeowner Act

I recently introduced the H.R. 6382, the Save the Bay Homeowner Act of 2010, legislation which would help the 17 million citizens of the Chesapeake Bay watershed to become citizen stewards of the Bay and give them an active role in restoring it. The legislation directs the EPA to develop a "Save the Bay Home" designation program that identifies various steps homeowners could voluntarily take around their property to reduce nutrient and sediment runoff and improve water quality in local streams and rivers that feed into the Bay. If a participating home meets certain standards, examples of which could include installing rain barrels or reducing fertilizer on lawns, that home could be designated a "Save the Bay Home." The bill further directs the EPA to give credit to states and local jurisdictions for nutrient and sediment level reduction based upon the number of homeowners that achieve the "Save the Bay Home" designation.

### Helping the Bay Meet Water Quality Standards

As the EPA's Bay Barometer study has [shown](#) we have a long way to go to bring the Bay back to full health. Because we have failed to meet water quality goals over the years, segments of the Bay have been classified as "impaired" water ways under the Clean Water Act. As a result, the EPA is required to develop a Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), which sets limits for how much pollution can run into the Bay from each state in the Bay watershed (Maryland, Virginia, New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Delaware, and the District of Columbia).

There are different ways that state and local governments can meet these standards but many require relatively complex infrastructure upgrades or storm water runoff retrofits. The Save the Bay Homeowner Act gives state and local jurisdictions a voluntary tool to meet TMDL standards while engaging the 17 million citizens of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Furthermore, if states and local jurisdictions receive credit towards their TMDL limit for "Save the Bay Homes," they can pass along those savings to homeowners who choose to participate in the program through reductions in their water and sewer bills or their property taxes – a meaningful incentive for citizens who do right by the Bay.

To truly Save the Chesapeake Bay, we need the 17 million people who live in the Bay's watershed to become citizen stewards of the streams and rivers in their community. If each individual within the watershed were to contribute to clean-up efforts, even in small ways, the aggregate would yield significant results in moving Bay restoration forward.

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