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COASTAL
CONSERVATION
ASSOCIATION

MARYLAND

RECREATIONAL ANGLERS FIGHTING FOR MARYLAND'S MARINE RESOURCES

March 3, 2015

To: Honorable Maggie McIntosh, Chair;
Honorable James E. Proctor, Jr., Vice Chair; and
Honorable Members of the House Appropriations Committee

Re: House Bill 72 Budget Reconciliation and Financing Act of 2015 – Restoration of
Department of Natural Resources Program Open Space Funds Allocated for the
Removal of Bloede Dam on the Patapsco River

Coastal Conservation Association Maryland strongly supports funding for this approved, shovel-ready project to remove the nonfunctioning dam that poses a threat to recreational anglers and obstructs the passage to spawning areas of multiple migratory fish species that are important to citizens of Maryland and the Atlantic coast.

A relatively modest investment by our state will leverage federal funds to remove a dam that poses an unfortunate threat to recreational anglers and other members of the public that enjoy the Patapsco River. Despite warning signs and the best efforts of the Natural Resources Police, individuals have lost their lives in the turbulent waters below the dam. The reality is that only by removing the nonfunctioning dam can the state effectively eliminate this risk to life and limb and avoid any associated liability.

In addition, removal of the dam will re-open and make available 58 river miles and multiple tributaries to spawning by multiple fish species that are critical to the Bay's health. Species such as shad, river herring, and American eel formerly had a material impact on Maryland's economy as they supported significant commercial and recreational fisheries. Environmental challenges, including their loss of access to spawning areas, have contributed greatly to these declines. However, preliminary studies have identified these species in the river immediately below the dam and past experience has shown that fish quickly return to their historic spawning grounds when obstructions are removed.

For these good and valuable reasons, CCA Maryland urges you to provide the funding necessary to ensure the availability of federal matching funds necessary to keep the long-planned removal on Bloede Dam on track and to remove a threat to human life and a literal barrier to critical fish species.