



MEDIA RELEASE

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Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Act Passed by the House of Representatives

Hughesville, MD – On July 19, the U.S. House of Representatives passed H.R. 2024, the Southern Maryland National Heritage Area Act, a major milestone for the pursuit of the region to be recognized as the 56th National Heritage Area in the United States. The legislation asks Congress to make an official designation that will help bring federal, state, and private resources together to conserve Southern Maryland’s natural landscapes, boost tourism to sustain the local economy, and recognize the historic significance of the Southern Maryland region at a national level.

[In a statement on the passage of the act](#), Majority Leader Hoyer emphasized the importance of Southern Maryland in American heritage. “Throughout our history, Southern Maryland has been the site of important milestones for our nation, from the first colony founded on religious freedom to the first person of African descent elected to an American legislature, from the first woman to petition for equal suffrage to the heroic efforts by those bringing the enslaved to freedom on the Underground Railroad. We have so much to preserve and share with our fellow Americans in Southern Maryland.”

The pursuit is spearheaded by the executive director and the national heritage area steering committee and includes the support of the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland and the Rural Maryland Council. The initiative is backed in the House by Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (MD) and in the Senate by Senator Ben Cardin (MD) with the support of Senator Chris Van Hollen (MD).

“What is truly exciting about this process, of becoming a National Heritage Area, is the partnership building,” said Destination Southern Maryland Executive Director Lucille Walker. “Together with the community, with local and state government, private and public organizations, regional bi-partisan support, and with the critical backing of our federal representatives, we are raising the national and international profile of Southern Maryland. It has, and continues to be, a team effort, for which we are very grateful.”

The Southern Maryland Heritage Area (public facing name Destination Southern Maryland) is a region of foundational stories, culture, and heritage, including the first people, the Piscataway. The current state-based heritage area includes Calvert, Charles and St. Mary’s Counties. The national heritage area will extend to the southern portion of Prince George’s County. “We have so much to give to the national story,” said Walker.

Walker continued with appreciation for the specific efforts of Majority Leader Hoyer getting this legislation passed through the U.S House of Representatives, as well as expressing gratitude for the continuing work on this initiative by Senator Cardin and Senator Van Hollen in the U.S. Senate. Said Walker, “We cannot become a national heritage area without an Act of Congress, and our legislators are making that happen.”

Destination Southern Maryland

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Southern Maryland



Destination Southern Maryland is the public face of the Southern Maryland Heritage Area. This state-based heritage area is one of the 13 Heritage Areas in Maryland and was founded in 2003. This organization represents Calvert, Charles and St. Mary's counties. Destination Southern Maryland is the heritage tourism entity for Southern Maryland with a mission to enhance the region through innovative heritage tourism experiences, comprehensive cultural and natural resource conservation, and excellence in educational opportunities. This organization assists Southern Maryland with economic development and works directly with the tourism entities in each of the three counties, as well as providing grants, building partnerships, and promoting regional identity. To learn more about Destination Southern Maryland, [visit our website](#).

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