

Town of Port Deposit

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Wayne Tome, Jr.
Mayor

Vicky Rinkerman
Town Administrator

July 19, 2023

Regulatory and Customer Service Division Chief
Wetlands and Waterways Protection Program
Water and Science Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment
1800 Washington Blvd, Suite 430
Baltimore, MD 21230

RE: Conowingo Dam WQC

The historic Town of Port Deposit in Cecil County is located directly south of the Conowingo Dam on the east bank of the Susquehanna River. Port Deposit is on the National Historic Registry and the town is part of numerous recreational venues, such as the Lower Susquehanna Heritage Greenway and Heritage Area, Lower Susquehanna Scenic Byway, Captain John Smith's Chesapeake National Historic Trail, etc. Over the last two hundred years, residents have enjoyed the abundant resources provided by the largest freshwater source entering the Chesapeake Bay, and suffered from flood disasters that have directly impacted our economic development, as well as quality of life.

The Reconsideration process provides an opportunity for the elected officials of the Town of Port Deposit to participate to identify potential issues and share our views on the effects of the project on the natural and human environment. The local issues our community is struggling with to address water quality, resiliency and ecosystem restoration are the following:

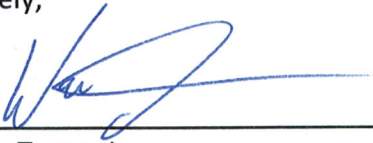
- Sediment - The release of sediment from behind the Conowingo Dam has led to areas of sediment fill in the River. The sediment directly impacts recreational boating and fishing.
- Debris - The release of debris has led to a build up along the living shoreline for the endangered Northern Map Turtles, along the shoreline in Marina Park, and a specific area of the shoreline where it gets trapped between the concrete pier/floating boat dock and the revetment wall at the shoreline. The living shoreline and concrete pier/boat dock are adjacent to each other in Marina Park. The debris build-up at the living shoreline directly impacts turtle access to the nesting area in front of the Visitor Center. The debris trapped along the shoreline has shaded out submerged aquatic vegetation (SUV) and caused stagnant water which promotes algae growth and dead zones in the Susquehanna River. This also impacts the turtles and recreational use of Marina Park for fishing and boating. Nuisance flooding from sea level rise, spill gate openings at the dam, and the debris along the shoreline impacts the playground and other

recreational uses in Marina Park.

- Hurricane and Tropical Storm Events - Repetitive flooding from storm events over the years has damaged historic properties and infrastructure on residential and commercial properties along the Susquehanna River and Main Street. The level of riverine flooding from storm events is increased from spill gate openings at the Conowingo Dam during a storm. In 2011, we experienced first-hand the devastation to property and quality of life that was caused from sediment deposited in a large area of our town from several storms.

The Conowingo Dam permanently changed the character of the Town of Port Deposit and it has a direct impact on our environment, economic development, and quality of life. On behalf of the elected officials, we urge you to ensure that the management, mitigation, and removal of the sediment and debris are addressed during the reconsideration process. Our hope is to continue building a strong community partnership with Constellation to ensure appropriate environmental conditions are imposed to reduce the impact of flooding and ensure the health of the Susquehanna, as well as the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wayne Tome, Jr.', is written over a horizontal line.

Wayne Tome, Jr.

Mayor

Town of Port Deposit