

# Chesapeake Conservancy

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Annapolis, MD  
21403  
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Honorable Molly Ward, Mayor  
City of Hampton  
22 Lincoln Street  
Hampton, VA 23669

Dear Mayor Ward:

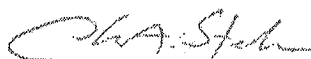
I am pleased to share a copy of a Resolution urging the President and the Congress to establish a Fort Monroe National Park/Monument that was unanimously adopted by the Board of the Chesapeake Conservancy at our annual meeting yesterday.

The Chesapeake Conservancy (formerly Friends of the John Smith Chesapeake Trail) is a non-profit organization founded in 2005 by Gilbert Grosvenor, Chairman of the National Geographic Society; William Baker, President of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation; and Patrick Noonan, Chairman Emeritus of The Conservation Fund. We represent numerous individuals and non-profit partners throughout Virginia and the Bay region who share our goals of conserving the watershed's lands and landscapes, improving public recreational access, promoting tourism opportunities and recreational experiences in the region, and engaging citizens in the stewardship of this magnificent resource in new and creative ways.

With its remarkable heritage dating to the Chesapeake's earliest inhabitants and European settlement and its spectacular resources, we believe that Fort Monroe and Old Point Comfort is a national treasure, a "pearl" on the string of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and a vital part of the Chesapeake's natural and cultural landscape. We have been working closely with the Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park (CFMNP), and other local, regional and national organizations to advance the designation of Fort Monroe, its historic buildings, beaches and natural areas known as Old Point Comfort as a new unit of the National Park System or a National Monument. In this regard, we support the principles of CFMNP, Preservation Virginia and others regarding the proposed boundary; shared management responsibilities between the National Park Service (NPS) and the Fort Monroe Authority (FMA); maintenance of a "green," park-like corridor through the Wherry Quarter; and NPS responsibilities for specific historic buildings and properties inside and outside the Fort.

We commend you for your continued leadership and commitment to preserving Fort Monroe and the Old Point Comfort peninsula.

Sincerely,



Charles A. Stek  
Chairman

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# Chesapeake Conservancy

## RESOLUTION #1 3.16.11

*Urging the President and the Congress to support the designation of Fort Monroe, its historic buildings, beaches and natural areas, as a new unit of the National Park Service or a National Monument.*

WHEREAS, Fort Monroe has a rich and storied heritage, dating to the Chesapeake's earliest native inhabitants and to Captain John Smith's explorations of Chesapeake Bay during the years 1607 to 1609; and

WHEREAS, originally named Point Comfort for the comfort this point of land provided to Smith and the early settlers after their arduous journeys to the New World and around the Bay, Captain Smith recognized its strategic value and called it an "isle fit for a castle"; and

WHEREAS, important events in our nation's and the Chesapeake's history happened here, including:

- disembarkation of the first African slaves in America in 1619;
- occupation by French troops during the Yorktown campaign in 1781;
- capture of the Old Point Comfort lighthouse by British troops during the War of 1812;
- construction, in response to the British invasion, of the nation's largest moat encircled granite fort, named after President Monroe and known as the "Gibraltar of the Chesapeake";
- Lincoln's reinforcement of the fort keeping it in Union control throughout the Civil War -- the only federal military installation in the upper South to remain so;
- the "contraband of war" decision of Union General Benjamin Butler which gave sanctuary to slaves fleeing the South at what came to be called "Freedom's Fortress";
- imprisonment of Jefferson Davis, after the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, the historic fort, its historic buildings and most of the peninsula have been recognized as a National Historic Landmark District; and

WHEREAS, the Fort Monroe peninsula contains spectacular and rare Bay beaches, marshes, wetlands, woodlands and other natural features that offer tremendous outdoor recreational and tourism opportunities for the citizens of Virginia and the Bay Region; and

WHEREAS, Fort Monroe, the fortifications built on this site, and the citizens who have served at this site, have stood sentinel over the Chesapeake Bay during the past 400 years; and

WHEREAS, under the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure process, Fort Monroe will close as a Military installation in September 2011; and

WHEREAS, Citizens for a Fort Monroe National Park, Preservation Virginia, Fort Monroe National Park Foundation, the Fort Monroe Authority, the Mayor of the City of Hampton, the

Governor of Virginia and Members of the area Virginia Congressional Delegation, thousands of local citizens and others have strongly supported the establishment of a substantial new unit of the National Park System or a National Monument at Fort Monroe to celebrate, preserve and interpret its history and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Conservancy's mission is to ensure conservation, stewardship, access, and enjoyment of the Chesapeake's iconic landscapes and waterways and its cultural and historic assets, highlighted by the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail and the Gateways Network; and

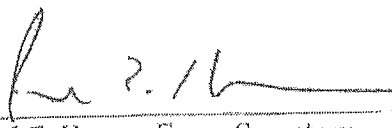
WHEREAS, the Chesapeake Conservancy believes that Fort Monroe, its historic buildings, beaches and natural areas are a national treasure, a jewel on the string of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail, and a vital part of the Chesapeake's natural and cultural landscape and heritage;

THEREFORE NOW BE IT RESOLVED that the Chesapeake Conservancy urges the President and the Congress to use the full authorities available and to take such actions as are necessary to:

1. Advance the designation of Fort Monroe, its historic buildings, beaches and natural areas otherwise known as Old Point Comfort as a new unit of the National Park System or a National Monument; and
2. Recognize the property as a "pearl" on the string of the Captain John Smith Chesapeake NHT and a vital part of the Chesapeake's natural and cultural landscape and heritage; and
3. Ensure that the Secretary of Interior and the Director of the National Park Service work in partnership with the Fort Monroe Authority in the management of appropriate parts of the property, with the Park Service to be accorded significant responsibilities over management of both historic and natural resources.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Chairman is hereby authorized to convey this resolution to the President, Members of Congress, the Secretary of Interior and other appropriate officials.

WITNESS the signature of the undersigned as of this 16<sup>th</sup> day of March, 2011.



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Paul E. Hagen, Esq., Secretary