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### **Virginia Gov. Mark Warner signs historic environmental legislation**

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RICHMOND, VA (03/25/05) -- Gov. Mark R. Warner has signed eight bills that significantly strengthen Virginia's ability to protect its environment and to conserve its natural resources. The legislation provides funding for the restoration of the Chesapeake Bay, strengthens enforcement of environmental laws, and rewards companies and local governments that have outstanding environmental protection records.

"This has been the best environmental session in a generation, perhaps the best session ever," said Gov. Warner. "A bipartisan coalition of legislators came together with the conservation community, local governments, and the business community to do the right thing for Virginia's environment."

#### **Legislation signed by Gov. Warner includes:**

SB 810 (Williams), SB 1235 (Quayle) and HB 2777 (Louderback), identical bills that provide for the \$50 million for Bay Cleanup in FY 2005 in conjunction with the Budget and identify funding of Chesapeake Bay cleanup as a priority in future years.

SB 1275 (Watkins) and HB 2862 (Bryant), identical bills that establish a nutrient trading program for the Bay. The bill will allow small dischargers to buy credits from bigger dischargers to meet their state permit limits for nutrient discharges, rather than having to undergo extensive upgrades for minor improvements in water quality. This will allow scarce resources to be used for upgrades that will make the biggest environmental improvements.

SB 1088 (Watkins/Whipple) and SB 1089 (Watkins/Whipple). These two companion bills strengthen environmental compliance and enforcement. SB 1088, Environmental Excellence, improves environmental compliance by rewarding 'good actors' (companies and local governments with excellent environmental records) with more flexibility in compliance approaches. SB 1089 toughens penalties for violation of environmental laws and regulations and gives the Department of Environmental Quality significantly more authority to issue civil penalties for

violation of water quality or air quality standards. Both bills were introduced at the request of the Governor.

SB 1141 (Hanger) This bill creates the Foundation for Virginia's Natural Resources to encourage collaboration and environmental stewardship among local governments, businesses, and communities.

Note: Where bills are identical, only the first bill has been linked.

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