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***For Immediate Release***

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Re: DFA Responds to MDE WQC for Exelon, Conowingo Dam

Delmarva Fisheries Association (DFA) wishes to acknowledge the ground-breaking nature of the Water Quality Certification (WQC) handed down by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on Friday. For years DFA members have been calling for action to be taken with regards to the garbage that builds up in the Conowingo Dam Reservoir, only to be let out with devastating impact when extreme weather events necessitate the opening of one or more spill gates. This “garbage” takes many forms:

- scoured sediment that both smothers aquatic plants and animals and also blocks sunlight from reaching underwater;
- nitrogen, phosphorus and other pollutants that harm aquatic creatures and those (like humans) that eat them;
- tree limbs and other debris that make boating hazardous and can tear up submerged vegetation; and,
- unnatural water flows and physical barriers that disrupt migratory fish looking to spawn.

The strong stance that Governor Hogan’s administration and MDE have taken on this matter should be well received across the board. The environmental implications of the special conditions imposed on Exelon are far-reaching. The Susquehanna is the single largest source of fresh water flowing into the Chesapeake Bay and drains an area of more than 27,000 square miles in New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland. Decisions made along the river banks have enormous impact on the ecosystems around the Bay, including those that support the commercial and recreational fisheries.

Exelon is in a unique position to work together with up- and downstream entities to find innovative ways of turning this outdated crap trap into a model for water quality restoration everywhere. Their actions are a determining factor in the current and future health of the Bay and the communities it supports. We hope they will rise to this stewardship challenge and improve the quality of life for all creatures living in and around the Chesapeake Bay watershed. We look forward to supporting this effort as it moves through the planning and implementation phase.

DFA applauds MDE and Governor Hogan for taking strong measures to address the problem of the Conowingo Dam during this once-in-a-generation opportunity to require conditions on the re-licensing of its operations.

Sincerely,

Capt. Robert Newberry  
*Chairman*